POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

PALMER WINS THE CHESTER CUP WITH "GOLDFINDER."

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PALMER THE POISONER.

"Justice, though moving with tardy pace, has seldom failed to overtake the wicked in their flight."

—HORACE, "Carmina."

YEARS before Galton formulated his celebrated theory of the influence of heredity on the formation of character, the people of the little town, or village, of Rugeley, in Staffordshire, determined that the criminal career of William Palmer was due in no small part to the blood which ran in his veins. He came of a stock tainted by undiscovered crimes, by swindles more or less overt on the part of the men, and by nameless transgressions on the female side. Was it a wonder, then, that he was predisposed to crime?

William Palmer was the second son of a timber merchant, who carried on his business at Rugeley, where all his children were born. On the day after William first saw the light, Thomas Sidney, an apprentice to the grocer who kept a shop opposite the Palmers' dwelling, came across the road to inquire on behalf of his master how the mother and child were doing. Thirty-two years later that apprentice, risen to be an alderman of the City of London, sat on the bench at the Old Bailey during the trial of William Palmer for murder.

As a lad, Palmer was sent to the village grammar school, where he was not popular with his fellow-pupils, in spite of his generosity. Those who remembered him at that period of his life spoke of him as a quiet, well-behaved lad, generous and good-tempered. His generosity, however, seems always to have been at the expense of someone else, for there are still a few living who can remember how William used to borrow small sums of money from his father's labourers on the plea that their master wanted change, and it was with funds thus obtained that he played the part of Prince Bountiful.

When he was fifteen, that is to say, in the year 1839, Palmer was apprenticed to a firm of wholesale druggists, named Evans, in Liverpool. For the first year or so all went well; the youth was attentive, studious, and punctual, and his employers had the highest regard for him. At length, however, unaccountable complaints arose. Various customers of Messrs. Evans began to write to the effect that they had remitted money to the firm in payment of their accounts, and that they had received no acknowledgment of its receipt. Messrs. Evans were certain that no money had been received, and the customers were equally positive that it had been sent, so complaints were made to the Postmaster-General, and an inspector was sent down from London to unravel the mystery.

At that time it was customary in Liverpool for large firms to have a box at the post-office, into which all their letters were put as soon as the mails came in, and clerks from the firms used to call for the letters several times a day, thus avoiding a good deal of delay. It was Palmer's duty to fetch the post for the wholesale house of druggists.

Mr. Evans saw him enter a by-street.

The inspector's research ended in the discovery of nothing; the post-office officials and employees had been

shadowed, test letters had been sent, but not the slightest irregularity came to light. Having satisfied himself that the missing letters had not gone astray while in the post the inspector returned to London.

Then it occurred to Mr. Evans, junior, one of the partners of the firm, that, though the letters had been traced from the customers to the Liverpool post-office, they had not been watched between the office and Lord Street, the site of his business premises. He had not the slightest suspicion of Palmer, but to assure himself that they could not have been lost on the way from the office he followed the apprentice one day and saw him receive a large bundle of letters.

Keeping carefully out of sight, Mr. Evans shadowed Palmer until he saw him enter a by-street. There the

panied by a brother of the culprit, and implored the Messrs. Evans to be merciful to him. These gentlemen pointed out to her that the matter really did not concern them, as it was the customers, and not the firm, that had been robbed. So Mrs. Palmer went round to the various persons from whom complaints had been received, and paid them the sums alleged to have been sent to Lord Street.

When there was no further chance of denying it Palmer confessed his guilt, and, on his expressing extreme penitence, his mother entreated Messrs. Evans to permit him to finish his indentures. That, naturally, they could not do; but, to avoid any scandal, they allowed Palmer's younger brother, Thomas, to complete the apprenticeship which he had begun.

PALMER OFFERED HIM HALF A SOVEREIGN TO DRINK ANOTHER GLASS.

youth felt all the letters, as if to see whether any of them contained any enclosures, and, finding one slightly more bulky than its fellows, he opened it. There was no money in it, so he crammed it into his pocket and set off towards the premises in Lord Street.

Mr. Evans arrived before him, and on his appearance received the postal packets from him.

"Are these all the letters that came to-day?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Palmer; "that is all there are."

"Then where," rejoined his employer, "is the letter which I saw you open in the street and put into your pocket?"

Even when thus charged, Palmer held out boldly, denying that he had been guilty of tampering with any of the envelopes, but the evidence against him was too strong, and he was instantly dismissed from the service of the firm, and a letter was sent by Messrs. Evans acquainting his mother with his conduct.

The old lady came over to Liverpool at once, accom-

Even at this early period of his career Palmer had acquired a taste for gambling, and a large part of his ill-gotten gains went to pay his losses on the Liverpool and Chester races, while a not inconsiderable portion was spent on the loose women with whom Liverpool, like all seaport towns, abounded.

The attempt to make a druggist of Palmer having turned out a failure, his mother thought that possibly, as he had a taste for medical science, he might become a good surgeon, and so, at the age of eighteen, Palmer was apprenticed to Mr. Edward Tylecote, surgeon, of Haywood, near Rugeley. The first impression that he made upon everybody was that he was industrious and kind; but his promptitude in calling on the sick, even in the middle of the night, was not thought so favourably of when it was discovered that swindling and seduction were among his weaknesses.

Here is a sample of one of his methods of obtaining money. A widow named Hawkins was tossed by a bull belonging to a farmer, called Parker. The poor woman

sent for her "club doctor," Mr. Tylecote; but he, being himself ill, could not attend. Mr. Parker, therefore, requested the woman to call in a surgeon named Masfen, whose fee he promised to pay. The widow agreed, and Masfen attended her, Palmer being always present to make up any medicines which the surgeon might prescribe. It was during the progress of this case that, Palmer, Parker, and the widow being alone together:

"I say," said Parker, "what's the amount of Masfen's fee?"

"Two guineas," replied Palmer. Whereupon Parker took out his purse and taking therefrom the required amount, threw it into the woman's lap. In doing so he dropped some gold.

"By the bye," asked Palmer suddenly, "can you change me a five-pound note?"

"Certainly!" said the farmer, giving him five sovereigns.

Palmer searched all his pockets without finding what he pretended to be looking for, then he turned to the farmer and said: "Ah! I remember now; I was in such a hurry to meet Masfen this morning that in changing my trousers I left the note in the pocket. Never mind, I will send it over by the boy who brings the medicine." Needless to say, the five-pound note never was sent.

Wrenched off the door-knockers during the night.

Three months after Parker wrote, threatening to prosecute, and the letter fell into the hands of Mr. Tylecote, who scolded Palmer and told him to get the money from his mother and send it at once to the farmer.

Palmer rode over to Rugeley, and soon got the money from his indulgent mother. Then he was sent to pay it to Mr. Parker, but never went near him, keeping the five pounds for his own debaucheries. A month or so later Mrs. Palmer had to pay the money a second time.

But Palmer did not confine his swindling to those who could afford it. He managed to scrape acquaintance with a footman at The Abbey, one of the mansions near Haywood, whom he persuaded to withdraw all his little savings from the bank, about fifteen pounds in all, and entrust them to him, promising that when he (Palmer) came of age he would return him twenty pounds and added interest. The footman waited till his death for that twenty pounds.

Even his profession was utilised by Palmer as a means of pursuing his wicked ways. When his master was tired, after a hard day's work, Palmer would suggest blandly that a patient, who lived some considerable distance off, ought to be visited, at the same time offering to go. The surgeon nearly always consented, and his apprentice, saddling the horse, rode off in the direction of the patient's house. As soon, however, as he was out of sight he would take a short cut back to the village, and spend the evening in the society of one of his many loves, returning late and entering a visit in the books.

Early one morning Palmer asked Mr. Tylecote to let him go for a day's rabbit-shooting, and, having obtained permission, set out. Nothing was heard of him for some days, when a letter came from a Mr. Lomax, asking for money to redeem Palmer from an inn in Walsall, where he lay in pawn for his bill, in company with Jane Widnall, a girl whom he had seduced. This was too much for the village doctor, and he sent the letter to Mrs. Palmer, who despatched two sons to bring back their brother. The prodigal son, however, had ideas of his own, and, after allowing his brothers to pay his bill for him at the hostelry, he disappeared in the inn yard, and returned next day, in triumph, to Stafford, in company with Jane Widnall.

This little episode put an end to his apprenticeship to Mr. Tylecote, who declared that he would never have Palmer in his house again. Much entreaty on the part of Mrs. Palmer softened the surgeon's heart, and he agreed to get Palmer into the Stafford infirmary as a walking pupil, and when his term was up to give him a certificate as if he had completed his apprenticeship with him. This satisfied our hero (?) admirably. But he knew that he would want money when in the county town, and he also knew that his mother would not let him have the sum he wanted.

Jane Widnall was the illegitimate daughter of the wife of a gardener named Vickerstaff, and Palmer managed to find out that Vickerstaff had the sum of £100 laid by in the bank, so he made violent love to Jane, and hinted to Vickerstaff that he was about to marry his step-daughter. Vickerstaff was pleased at this, and readily allowed Palmer to borrow all his savings from him, hoping thereby to help on the wedding-day and rid himself of a daughter of whom he was, naturally, not over-proud. The money, however, was all that William Palmer wanted, and, having got that, he left the girl to mourn and, incidentally, to rear a son, the fruit of their intimacy.

While Palmer was at Stafford infirmary an incident took place which, in view of his subsequent career, cannot be regarded without suspicion. It had been the custom at the infirmary for the pupils to dispense the prescriptions of the physicians attending the institution, but the medical men so resented Palmer's interference in the dispensing-room that they passed a rule to the effect that no pupil was to enter that apartment in future. What Palmer's interference amounted to has never been made known, but that the rule was made on his account alone there can be little doubt, since a few days after he left the infirmary another gentleman, named, curiously enough, William Palmer, was appointed to the post of dispenser. It is not impossible that even when a student of medicine the study of poisons attracted Palmer, and he could not resist the temptation of seeing if his theories were borne out in practice.

Palmer remained at Stafford until he was nearly twenty-two years of age, and then went to London. He was never popular either with his fellow-students at the Stafford infirmary or with the townsfolk, and it is generally said that he was "advised" to leave the town. Whether this is true or not, there can be no doubt that an unfortunate matter in which he was one of the principal performers hastened his departure from the Midland town.

The affair was this. One day in the spring of 1846 Palmer invited a man, named Abley, into the Lamb and Flag Inn, and there gave him brandy-and-water, ordering the landlady to give him eight-pennyworth each time, instead of four-pennyworth as Abley supposed. The man became very intoxicated in a short time and refused to drink any more, but Palmer offering him half a sovereign to drink another glass, he tossed it off, vomited directly, staggered out, and died in the stable. Another account says that Abley only drank two tumblers of brandy off as the result of a bet, and then went out to the stable and

died. Of course there was an inquest, but the verdict returned was one of "Death through natural causes," although the foreman of the jury declared till his death his firm conviction that Abley was poisoned by Palmer. At the inquest a good deal was said about undue intimacy taking place between the medical student and Abley's wife, and this, coupled with rumours of the fate of Jane Widnall, did not increase Palmer's popularity.

Palmer did very little real work while at Stafford, and when he went to London, in 1846, he found that he was very backward in his professional studies. Accordingly he placed himself under a Dr. Stegall, with a view to passing his examination. Dr. Stegall was well known in the profession, and occasionally acted as a coach for backward students. To spur

pecuniary difficulties—difficulties which ultimately led him to the scaffold. Like everything else, one's student life has an end, and on August 10, 1846, William Palmer received his diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons, and was at last a qualified medical man. He then returned to Rugeley, hoping to make a practice for himself there.

In those days it was customary for country practitioners to have unqualified assistants, who took charge of minor cases, and who acted more or less as touts for their principals. When Palmer went back to Rugeley to practise his profession he was well aware that one of the most respected of these unlicensed medicos, and one of the most popular, was a Mr. Benjamin Thirlby, assistant to Mr. Salt, a surgeon with a large practice. Benjamin had

MR. DAWSON FORBADE PALMER THE HOUSE.

him on in his efforts to assist him Palmer promised the doctor £50 if he got his diploma, to which sum Mrs. Palmer added a promise of £10, and Mr. Jerry Smith, a crony of Palmer's, promised a like amount. True to his character, Palmer never paid Dr. Stegall, nor did he give him the £10 which his mother sent to him to be handed to the doctor. Mr. Jerry Smith repudiated his promise entirely, and only after suing him did the doctor get the money.

It was, of course, necessary that Palmer should attend the lectures at one of the great London hospitals, and to do this he entered his name at St. Bartholomew's. While a student in London Palmer went the way of all medicals, and lived a really fast life. That was in the days when the student's greatest ambition was to have a large collection of door-knockers, wrenched off during his midnight prowls, and Palmer was an adept at the practice. Among the fast men he was the fastest and most extravagant, and it was while attending "Bart's" for the short period he was in the metropolis that he first got into

the reputation of being a very keen man of business and, therefore, Palmer made overtures to him in a more or less business fashion, and, after the passing of a little money, Mr. Thirlby forsook his old master and threw in his lot with the new doctor. This gross disregard of professional etiquette did not improve Palmer's reputation with his colleagues.

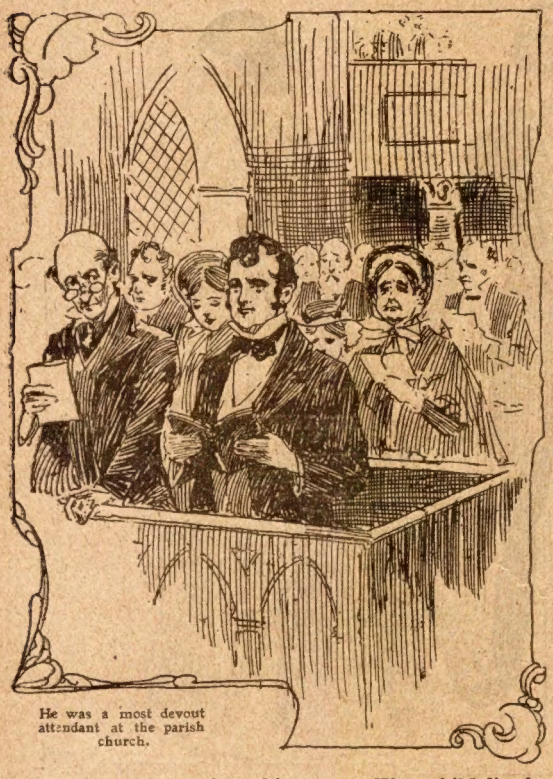
As a young man Palmer had a very fascinating way with women, and, alas! made bad use of it, for before he was married he was the undoubted father of more than a dozen illegitimate children. While he was at Stafford infirmary he made the acquaintance of a beautiful young lady, named Annie E. Thornton, herself the natural daughter of a Colonel Brookes, by which latter name she was usually known.

Annie Brookes was residing with her guardian, Mr. Dawson, of Abbot's Bromley, for she was a ward in Chancery. She possessed a well-lined purse as well as a beautiful figure, both of which were irresistible attractions to Palmer, who immediately began to pay his addresses to

her. Mr. Dawson, having heard of Palmer's looseness where women were concerned, and having a fear that his ward might be attracted by the fatal fascination which the medical student possessed, forbade him the house and warned Annie against him in no measured terms. Palmer persevered, and in 1845 proposed and was rejected. Nothing daunted, he still pursued his quarry, and when he repeated his proposal in 1847, and backed it with an appeal to the Court of Chancery, he was successful, and carried off his bride, in spite of the violent opposition of her guardians.

He settled down in a small two-storeyed house standing a little back from the main road in Rugeley, and gave himself up, apparently, to his calling and to family pleasures. To all outward appearances he was a reformed character.

A year after his marriage Palmer became the father



He was a most devout attendant at the parish church.

of the first child to bear his name. That child lived to grow up and see his father executed. Four other children, the issue of the marriage, all died in infancy, three when a fortnight old, and one after three weeks' existence. They all died in convulsions, and the nurse, Ann Bradshaw, is said to have run into a public-house in Rugeley when the fourth death took place, exclaiming: "I'll never go back to that wretch Palmer's house again! The poor dear child was as well and healthy as possible, when Palmer comes upstairs and says to me, 'You can go down, Bradshaw; I'll nurse the child for a few minutes.' But the poor child's screams made me run up again, when I found the baby had just died of convulsions."

One trait in Palmer's character stands out with a force which almost makes one shudder. He was a most devout attendant at the parish church, and would often travel long distances on Saturdays in order to be in his place when the Sunday service began. Throughout the whole of the prayers he was most attentive and acquired almost a reputation for piety, in spite of his youthful misbehaviour, by the assiduity with which he used to take notes of the sermons. Whether he really believed that the faults of the week were atoned for by the devotions of the Sabbath, or whether he was a thoroughly hardened hypocrite, it is not for us to determine, but the fact that he never lost the least of his external piety when engaged in the active practice of his horrible crimes makes it hard to believe that his devoutness had more than a purely worldly object.

With whatever good intentions Mr. Palmer may have settled down to his married life in Rugeley, he did not succeed as a country practitioner. Either rumours of his early escapades, or his own indolence and carelessness, prevented patients from coming to his surgery, and, after about a year's trial of his profession, he abandoned it for the turf.

Accustomed from early childhood to be with horses, he was not long in acquiring the expensive habits and unscrupulous practices of the horse-dealing fraternity. His knowledge of horse-flesh was good, and he set up a breeding and racing stable, owning in whole or part during his short career such important racers as Goldfinder, Doubt, Mermaid, Polestar, Chicken, and Nettle.

Goldfinder he ran for the Chester Cup, and saw him pass the post first, winning for his master a considerable sum of money. This elated Palmer a good deal, and he thought that the small house standing back from the road at Rugeley was not a fit home for the owner of successful racehorses, so he purchased The Hawthornes, a very pretty place just outside Stafford, for £2,520, part of Goldfinder's winnings. But racing is like a game of see-saw, the devotee of the turf being up one day and down the next; so the day after he had completed the purchase Palmer found that he had laid out more money than he could afford, and at once mortgaged the place for £1,600, letting the estate to friends of his.

Betting was almost a passion with Palmer, but so carefully did he conceal his transactions, even from his friends, that it was never known to what extent he was implicated in the fortunes of any particular horse. His control of his features was remarkable; for instance, when Nettle ran in the Oaks it was known that by one venture alone Palmer stood to win £10,000. The horse, it will be remembered, fell, breaking his jockey's thigh, and did not pass the post. When Mr. Dorling, at the time, commiserated Palmer on his bad fortune, the latter merely remarked: "It is rather a bore, isn't it?" Yet that £10,000 would have extricated Palmer from the financial slough into which he had fallen, and possibly saved him from committing the crime for which he was eventually hanged.

He was never popular with the better class of racing men, and on two occasions he was posted as a defaulter and banished from Tattersall's, while there was an ugly rumour afloat to the effect that he used to "nobble" his own horses. He was shunned by the more respectable of the bookmakers, and had to deal with little-known men, of whose paying powers he was never certain; but, then, he was himself a notoriously bad paymaster, and was only treated in the manner he had served others.

Marriage does not seem to have improved Palmer's morality, for some time after he was wedded to Annie Thornton he had an illegitimate daughter by a woman named Jane Mumford, who lived in Rugeley. The paternity was proved against him, and he had to pay the customary maintenance. This was inconvenient to Palmer, but circumstances soon relieved him of the burden. Having the child brought to his house for him to assure himself that it was alive, he took it into his private room, and when he brought it out returned it to Jane. The child was taken ill as soon as it reached home, and died almost immediately after. It does seem strange how fatal Palmer's influence seemed to be with children!

We have seen how frequently Palmer in his youth had recourse to his mother when he was in pecuniary difficulties, and the liberality with which she relieved his necessities; after his marriage he transferred his patronage to his actual mother-in-law—Mrs. Thornton, the mother of Annie Brookes—and on more than one occasion he obtained from her a large sum of money.

Being one day a little more in need of funds than usual, he went to see Mrs. Thornton, who lived at Stafford, and asked her to advance him a certain sum of money, which, in effect, was the same thing as giving it to him; and at the same time he asked her to come and live with him and her daughter at Rugeley.

The old lady had a great objection to lending Palmer the amount asked for, and a still greater objection to going to live with her son-in-law, so Palmer went back to Rugeley in high dudgeon. Next day, however, fearing that her daughter might suffer for her mother's prudence, she sent Palmer a cheque for £20 to appease him. The doctor was not satisfied with this amount alone, but still insisted that Mrs. Thornton should come and live with him. The more he urged her to do so the more reluctant she became, but even as the continual dropping of water will wear away a stone, so his importunity prevailed, and she left her home, remarking to a friend: "I know I shall not live a fortnight!" Nor did she!

By the death of Mrs. Thornton, luckily occurring when Palmer was hard pressed for money to pay his racing debts, the Rugeley doctor became possessed of nine houses in Stafford, and the principal of the income which Colonel Brookes had settled on his paramour.

In May, 1850, Palmer found himself indebted to a Mr. Bladon, who resided at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in the sum of about £400, and had not the means to pay with. Wishing, however, to preserve the terms of friendship on which they had always been, he wrote to Mr. Bladon, asking him to pay him a visit. "Come down," he wrote, "and you shall have some good sport, and before you return I will pay you."

Bladon agreed and went to Rugeley. While there he was driven over to Ashby and back to Rugeley one day by Jeremiah Smith, one of Palmer's cronies. At that time Bladon was in good health, though not quite recovered from an accident which he had met with some little time before. He had with him more than £100, and also his betting book. In less than a week he fell ill, and, after William Palmer and his assistant, Thirlby, had exhausted their skill, an old doctor, named Bamford, was called in to prescribe a mixture. Palmer never thought it worth his while to inform Mrs. Bladon of her husband's illness, and had not a friend of Bladon's, named Merritt, on his return from the Chester races, called at Rugeley to see Bladon, and found him in such a fearful state that he at once went to London and sent Mrs. Bladon down by the express train, she would never have seen her husband alive. As it was, she arrived at Rugeley to find Bladon speechless and on the point of death, and at once asked Palmer to send for Mr. Bostock, a friend of her husband's, or for her husband's brother. Palmer made the excuse that Ashby was a long way off, across country roads, and that it would be impossible to get there in less than two or three days, although he well knew that Jeremiah Smith had been to Ashby and back a few days before in twenty-four hours.

There were other suspicious circumstances connected with this case which are worthy of note. For instance, Mrs. Bladon was only allowed to see her husband for a very short space of time. She was then hurried from the room and not allowed to enter it again while Mr. Bladon was living, nor to see him after his death. The body was also buried with indecent haste, the reason assigned by Palmer being that decomposition had already set in.

Upon Mrs. Bladon expressing surprise that only a sum of £15 was found among her husband's effects, Palmer explained that Bladon had been over to Ashby, and while there had paid away a considerable sum of money. This was false, as, far from paying away money in Ashby, Bladon had been there to receive it. Furthermore, it was found that all the deceased man's pockets had been turned out and all his papers rummaged, and that the betting book which he always carried with him was missing. A little suspicion must also attach to the fact that Bladon's death occurred directly after the Chester races, when it is highly probable that Palmer lost considerably to him.

Not content with the spoils which it is a moral certainty he obtained from Bladon, Palmer attempted to get Mrs. Bladon to sign a paper to the effect that her husband was indebted to him in the sum of £59, whereas the reverse was the fact. The widow would have done so in a minute if Palmer, making the mistake which always marks the criminal, of "over-doing it," had not told her that he had never borrowed a penny from her husband in his life. The end of the matter was that, although Bladon's brothers and friends were far from satisfied that there had been no foul play, and one of them went so far as to write to the police of Rugeley, Mrs. Bladon was unwilling that so grave a suspicion should be attached to

"I know I shall not live a fortnight."

one who had always been their friend, without there being more weighty evidence to bring forward.

There can be no doubt that Mrs. Bladon was largely influenced in the course she took by her sympathy for Mrs. Palmer. The following letter to Mr. Bostock, who was one of the most dissatisfied parties, shows this clearly:

DEAR SIR,—I am exceedingly obliged to you and Mrs. Bostock for the kind interest you take in my affairs, and have no doubt, from the respect you bore my late husband, you would have done what you say; but, if you take into consideration the afflicting circumstances I was placed in, with no one of my own friends round me to advise or counsel me, ignorant of the distance (which I considered much farther), bowed down by grief as I was, you will not be surprised that I did not act with the coolness of after-reflection.

In the midst of my trouble Mr. Palmer insisted on my signing a paper for £59, £50 of which he said Mr. Bladon borrowed of him, and the £9 he said he had paid him for twenty gallons of gin, which he had not received.

The gratitude I felt for the kind treatment Bladon

had, I thought, received from them would have induced me to have signed it in a moment, could I have done so without distressing myself; but, knowing the embarrassed state of my affairs, which I candidly informed them of, still Mr. Palmer insisted on my signing the paper, urging, if it was not in my power to pay, he would not compel me to do so; and I think I should have been induced to have done so had he not said he had never borrowed a farthing of Mr. Bladon in his life. I knew that he told a falsehood, as I had seen a letter in which he acknowledged £100, and told him so. From that moment he ceased to insist on my signing the paper, telling me he would make me a present of it; and, on Mrs. Palmer coming into the room, from which she had been absent a short time, he told her to throw the paper (which was lying on the table) into the fire.

Now, as regards the notions that William and you seem to entertain of his brother's death, I entertained no suspicions. I felt, and still feel, extremely obliged to Mrs. Palmer for her kindness to me, which could not be greater if I had been a relative of her own.

Consider how shocking it would appear, without some proof more than mere surmises, to accuse anyone of a foul crime, which your letter more than hints at. If your mind is not easy, go over yourself and make inquiries; but pause ere you do anything to render Mrs. Palmer so uneasy as so dreadful a suspicion must make her. Think in such a case what the feelings of your own wife would be, and consider mine. That Mr. Palmer has acted unjustly in money matters I have good reason to believe; his letters I have placed in the hands of the brewery firm, and if they think proper, and that there are sufficient grounds, they will, no doubt, investigate the matter.

Thanking you and Mrs. Bostock for your kind invitation, of which I shall be happy to avail myself, allow me to subscribe myself your sincere friend,

E. J. BLADON.

June 14, 1850.

Horse Stealers of Old.

THE invention of the telegraph has done much to put a stop to horse stealing, at one time one of the most profitable branches of the thief's profession, and it is now a rare thing for a man to get clean away with another's horse. One of the most curious incidents in the long history of horse stealing took place in the early part of last century, when a highwayman and horse-thief was hanged for a crime which he never committed. After robbing a party on the road the thief's horse was shot under him. Fearing capture, he stole another horse from the stables of the nearest inn and rode off. Shortly afterwards he was arrested for murder and eventually hanged in due course. It later appeared that the owner of the stolen steed had shot one of the occupants of a coach, but not before other passengers had noted the peculiar bridle which was on the horse. From this it was inferred that the horse-stealer was the murderer, and he had to pay the penalty as such.

The usual modus operandi of the rogues was to twist swathes of straw round the hoofs of the horse which was to be conveyed away, so as to prevent the shoes clattering on the stable yards and so giving the alarm. One ingenious member of the fraternity then invented boots for his coveted prey, which were more convenient than the straw covering and more effective. The descendants of those boots can be seen to-day in the coverings used on horses employed in cutting and rolling large cricket grounds. Once clear of the stable the boots were removed and handed to a confederate, for the gentlemen always hunted in couples, and the nag was ridden off as fast as possible to another county.

The king of horse stealers was Turpin, whose life we have given already.

Crime Areas in London.

IF you were to tell persons that in many cases crime is purely local, they would laugh at you and say that it might be so in Ireland, when "moon-lighting" was the fashion, but that it cannot be considered local in Great Britain. Strange, however, as it may appear to the uninitiated in criminology, criminals of certain types congregate together, rigidly excluding from their circles those who are less favoured—or cursed. The burglar seldom mixes with the mere pick-pocket, while the swell mobsman has a hearty contempt for the shop-lifter. It is not, therefore, an anomaly that those poor victims to temptation, or to heredity, who pursue crime as their sole aim in life should select spots in which to dwell with others of their own calling.

As a study in criminal areas, London undoubtedly affords the best field, inasmuch as it is so much larger than other cities, abounds so plentifully with criminals, and possesses so many attractions to those who prefer dishonesty to honest labour.

Where, then, are we to go for our criminals in London? Well, select the species of scoundrel which you want, and we shall have little difficulty in finding him. I do not mean to say that all burglars live in one district or that all who follow nefarious callings congregate, for it is obvious that the better-educated swindlers avoid one another, but I do assert that within the Metropolis there are distinct crime areas where may be found exponents of the principal offences against the law.

Do you want to study the typical burglar? Go to Hoxton, where they have their colony, and have held their stronghold for many years. The boundary between Hoxton and Shoreditch also divides the burglar town into two. The spot is a dangerous one for the police, but infinitely more dangerous for the "nark," or police spy. As regards the housing of these predatory scamps, their dwellings compare favourably with those of some other types of criminals, though they all seem to have a penchant for dirt. It has been noticed, however, that the burglar usually sees that his wife is decently dressed, which is more than can be said for any other class of criminal drawn from the lower ranks of society.

Going a little farther west, just where Finsbury and Holborn meet, we have the camping-ground of the majority of violent thieves in London, and if you are really desirous of seeing the marks left on the back of the villain by the cat, the expenditure of a few shillings will enable you to do so in any of the most disreputable streets in this neighbourhood; but it must not be forgotten that the natural habit of the dwellers here may lead them to rob the inquirer, as well as exhibit to him the effects of a sentence for violent robbery. This class of criminal is largely recruited from the alien population in London, and it is thus apparent why they have made their home so close to the Italian quarter.

Dock thieves are to be found most plentifully in the region known as Orchard House, on the boundary of Poplar. There they dwell, housed like pigs, absolutely ignorant of even the common decencies of every-day life. The dock thief is despised by almost every one of his fellow-criminals, and he has been driven away from their haunts.

Tramps have their own headquarters at a spot appropriately named "The Dust Hole," close to Woolwich Arsenal. True, the tramp cannot be regarded as absolutely a criminal, but he is irreclaimably idle, and prefers to live on charity to doing a stroke of honest work.

The Potteries, in aristocratic Kensington, Sultan Street, in Lambeth and Camberwell, and the Wandle Valley, in Wandsworth, are all genuinely criminal districts, where men and women live the life of beasts, regardless of the laws of God and man. The criminals dwelling in these plague-spots are general miscreants, heedless if they are engaged in picking pockets or burglary, having no regular nefarious calling, but seizing every opportunity for plundering that may come in their way.

Campbell Road, in the north of Islington, is, as might be expected, the headquarters of dog-stealers and horse and cattle thieves, though, by courtesy, a few burglars, whose operations are mainly confined to the north of London, and a modicum of begging-letter writers dwell there also.

But the very worst spot in the whole of London is that known as the Fenian Barracks. It lies in the most wretched part of Bow, and is notorious for the violence of the ruffians who dwell there, sending more policemen to hospital in a year than any other portion of the Metropolis. The squalor and misery which prevail there are terrible.

These are only a few of the more important criminal districts in the great modern Babylon,

THE WAYS OF THE CRIMINAL

V.—PICKPOCKETS AND HOW THEY SECURE THEIR PLUNDER.

IN London, when there are no big functions to cause crowds to gather, the expert pickpocket repairs to the great shopping centres. Regent Street, Piccadilly, Oxford Street, Bond Street, St. Paul's Churchyard, where there are plenty of shops to attract crowds to the windows, are the favourite haunts of the light-fingered gentry. The "operator" works his way into the crowd, gazing at a brilliant display of goods. Close behind him comes the cover, whilst away at the edge of the crowd is the look-out man ready to whistle "Wait till the clouds roll by," or any other agreed signal should a policeman or a detective put in an appearance. The "cover" has to be an exceptionally smart man. He stands so that the movements of the "operator's" hands are almost hidden from prying eyes, and he must be ready at any moment to receive from the actual thief whatever may have been stolen. Thus, if a watch is taken, he receives it, and at once slowly moves away from the spot. If suspicion has been cast upon the "operator" the latter is only too ready to submit to a search, for he knows that his accomplice has vanished from the scene, and that the stolen property is already a good distance off. It is only when there is a possibility of an alarm being raised that the "cover" makes himself scarce; otherwise he hangs round ready to receive further plunder.

If, however, the thief cannot find a crowd to operate in, he is not backward in making a crowd of his own. Some time ago a trio of clever pickpockets had quite a royal time of it until an astute detective dropped upon them and landed them in gaol. One of the three who could speak fairly well rigged up a stall, and took his stand at various street corners with a flaring naphtha lamp and a huge umbrella, all to attract attention. His stock in-trade consisted of some polishing-paste—a well-known brand taken from the original tins and placed in ointment boxes—a number of dull pieces of iron, and a couple of dusters.

A good "mark."

Having made a speech and gathered a crowd round him, he proceeded to display the capabilities of the paste. All sorts and conditions of people would stop to look on, and meanwhile their pockets were being rifled by the two confederates, whose long fingers rarely dipped in vain. All was fish which came to their net—loose coppers from the fob-pocket, a watch, a purse, or even a pocket-knife. Whatever their fingers touched they lifted.

Another gang of thieves—four in number—finding themselves very hard up, put a bold plan into execution one evening. The scene was the "Angel" at Islington, where there is always a fair number of people scattered about the pavement waiting for 'buses and trams. The quartette of thieves approached, one of them, some yards in advance of the others, giving a really clever imitation of a man three-parts drunk. The policeman on point duty was a very young hand, and as he walked half-a-dozen yards or so from the corner to move on a cabby who had halted his vehicle in the way of the 'buses, the "drunken" man commenced to play his part.

He lurched up to the constable and complained that he had been very nearly run over by a hansom. He pointed to some mud on his coat-sleeve—it came there when he purposely leant against the wheel of a 'bus waiting to pick up a passenger—and insisted that the cabby's name and number should be taken.

The constable was very solicitous, said he hoped that no harm would come of the adventure, and regretted that, as he had seen nothing of the incident, he could take no action in the matter.

A pair of young sharps.

At this the thief pretended to fly into a great rage, and the more the constable tried to pacify him the worse he became, until quite a big crowd was attracted to the scene of the disturbance.

The young policeman was bewildered, but he did his best to put an end to the scene. Meanwhile, the three remaining thieves were hard at work. Each had accounted for more than one pocket, when they almost simultaneously squirmed at a tight grip upon their arms. They were in the custody of three of the most astute detectives in the north of London. The officers came on the scene just as the "drunken" thief commenced operations. They recognised him as a clever pickpocket, and, suspecting that something was in the wind, awaited events, with the result already stated. "Bring him down," said one of the detectives to the policeman and pointing to the fourth thief, who in astonishment had suddenly sobered, and in less time than it takes to tell the quartette, each tightly held by an officer of the law, were on their way to Bagnigge Wells Police Station.

One of the favourite "marks" of the pickpocket is the bluff, hearty man from the country, such a one as is depicted by our artist. He arrives at one of the great railway stations, disdains the aid of a cab, and, with a bag in each hand, proceeds on his way to his hotel or lodgings. His overcoat and undercoat lie open. Across his waistcoat a massive gold chain stretches, and suggests that a valuable watch reposes in the left-hand pocket of his vest. By-and-by something attracts his attention. It may be a high building or a street fight, or perhaps a group of little ones dancing to the strains of a piano-organ, and he stands and gazes open-mouthed. The crook sees his opportunity and seizes it. In

a moment the old gentleman is jostled on one side. He turns to remonstrate with the unruly man who has pushed against him, and in a trice on the other side the smart pickpocket has "bashed" his watch. First the thief gave a gentle pull to ascertain if the watch was protected by any patent device or not. Having discovered that it was free, he lifts it with his fingers, a long thumb-nail slips into the spring of the swivel, and the watch drops into his palm. Then, if the thief is audacious, or if he has plenty of time, he gently inserts the chain into the empty pocket, and promptly effaces himself.

The swivel nippers.

Within a very short time the watch has either been pawned or sold to a "fence," and the thieves are enjoying the proceeds of their daring venture.

"Cruisers," as a detective called them the other day, are always on the look-out for victims of this type. As will be seen from our artist's sketch (the drawing is from life, and was made at the Old Bailey a couple of months ago), "cruisers" are very smart-looking young men who look anything but thieves. They dress and speak very well, and they proceed on their way as if they had some definite and legitimate object in view. As a matter of cold fact, they have a purpose—a criminal one. They take their walks abroad at the stations or in the sight-seeing centres. Even at Westminster Abbey there is a notice posted up warning one against pickpockets, but the warning is taken little notice of, and, for all the good it is, might not be there at all.

The pickpocket's victim is always on hand. He goes about inviting thieves to relieve him of his valuables. He stands in Trafalgar Square, looking at the top of the Nelson column. Apparently he falls into a reverie, and ponders upon the greatness of England's most famous sailor. Along come the pickpocket and his pal. The sun gleams on the gold watch-chain. In a moment the thieves are all attention. Business is to be done, and they are there to do it. They separate, and number one prepares for work. Out come his hands from his pockets. A close observer might note the gleam of steel in his right mauley. Is he about to assassinate the sightseer? Not a bit of it! His hand holds a pair of exceedingly sharp and strong cutting pliers. The tool is small, and just fits the palm of the hand. A ring attached to one of the knives and slipped over the thumb keeps it in place. The victim, all unconscious, takes a step backward to get a better view of England's hero. Someone touches him on the right shoulder. It is thief number two,

How the blind pickpocket was foiled.

and as the victim turns he says, "Oh, I beg pardon, but I thought you were Mr. So-and-So. So sorry to have disturbed you."

"Don't mention it!" says the effusive sightseer; "no harm done!" and he returns to his gazing. Later on, when he wonders if it is tea-time, his hand goes to his vest pocket, in order that his watch may be consulted. The pocket is empty, and half of his chain has vanished. All that is left of his guard dangles disconsolately from his button-hole. And even then it does not strike him that the polite stranger of Trafalgar Square had anything to do with the disappearance of the timepiece. When, however, he tells his story to the police, he is considerably enlightened.

If one went out into the streets of London to look for a pickpocket the last man to be chosen would be one who to all appearances was stricken with blindness. But some time ago the West-End of London was the happy hunting-ground of an exceptionally smart thief who grew rich upon the plunder which he daily took from Samaritans who helped him on his way. He was a capital actor, and his "make-up" consisted solely of rolled-up eyes, a stick which he continually tapped on the pavement as he walked along, and a placard which requested the benevolent passer-by to "pity the blind." He betrayed a great amount of nervousness as he passed through the crowds, and when he came to a crossing stood appealingly on the kerb waiting for someone to pilot him across the road. By-and-by some thoughtful person would notice and take pity upon him, and, holding him by the arm, would lead him across the street. Then came the rogue's opportunity. Whilst the kind-hearted stranger was fully occupied in watching the traffic the "blind man" was equally busy relieving him of any valuables which he could reach with his free hand, for the walking-stick was always transferred to the hand held by the pilot. It was an amusing sight to see him one day as he pathetically struggles against adverse fate. A gentleman wearing a handsome gold chain and probably a valuable watch as well, was showing him the way to a 'bus, and as the crowd was very thick had a tight grip on the "blind" man's right arm, just below the elbow, in order to guide him more surely. The firmness of his clutch saved his jewellery, for, try as he would, the thief could not get his free hand near his helper's waistcoat.

"A wolf in sheep's clothing." The parson with the baggy umbrella.

Pickpockets adapt themselves to circumstances in a remarkable manner, and it is only necessary to refer to the reports of cases which are continually heard at the sessions to prove this. It was proved last summer that a modern Fagin dressed up some smart young thieves as Eton boys, and sent them into the well-dressed crowds which thronged Lord's cricket ground during the progress of the Eton and Harrow cricket match, whilst in another case a detective stated that the prisoner during the May meetings at Exeter Hall dressed as a clergyman and walked up and down the Strand carrying a baggy umbrella into which his confederates—who were busy plundering the clerics—dropped whatever they happened to lift.

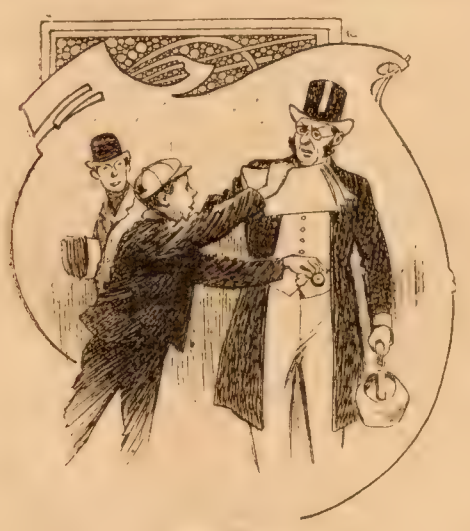
Some racecourse pickpockets worked an ingenious plan. One of their number as soon as a race commenced planted himself so as to obtain a good view of the contest, and then, with a pair of binoculars to his eyes, the empty case slung at his back, proceeded to give an elaborate and exciting description of the race. The crowd, pushing and straining to listen to the description and to obtain a glimpse of the horses, found that the talkative gentleman with the glasses continually stepped backwards and forwards, apparently to obtain a better view of the course, but at the same time increasing the confusion. The race over, the man shut up his binoculars and disappeared in order, as he remarked aloud, to collect his winnings. At the same time two or three other members of the crowd detached themselves from the throng and followed him. At the back of the grand stand the gang met and grinned delightedly at one another. "All serene," says the man with the glasses, and out of the case comes an assortment of plunder—purses and watches, a pin or two, a fat wallet, and loose cash—all of which had been dropped in

by the "operators" who, whilst the race was being described, had busied themselves in rifling the pockets of the eager listeners.

One of this gang—the quartette at the time of writing are at large, and we could name each of them—was a most bucolic-looking individual, and his most successful weeks of the year are when horse and cattle shows are held at the Agricultural Hall, Islington. Dressed as a country farmer, with gaiters and long-tail coat, and assuming the bluff heartiness of the countryman, he mixes with the real thing at the Hall, and if a good few of them miss the money which they have saved up to spend in London our yokelised pickpocket can tell where it has gone to. He, too, was the leader of one of the hottest gangs of juvenile thieves which ever infested London. When nothing else claimed his attention he daily moved out of Hoxton, where he had his abode, dressed in a flash suit and with a portable stall under his arms. If you took the trouble to watch him on these occasions you would see some distance behind him three or four lads, and following these at a respectable distance another group of boys. By-and-by the thief would reach a likely spot, and forthwith he would pitch his stall and commence to sell the "Brummagem" jewellery with which it was stocked. His flow of speech and ready wit speedily gathered a crowd, and in this crowd the boys would take an inconspicuous place. But the boys were well-trained thieves, and their nimble fingers were dipping in every available pocket. The seller of jewellery raises his hat and wipes the perspiration from his brow. Look round and you will find that the boys have disappeared. The simple action we have described was the signal that policemen were approaching and that the place was too hot to hold them.

Soon the stall-holder would follow them, and operations on a similar scale would recommence on another spot.

These are the men who work railway stations and booking offices. On the station platform it is the easiest thing in the world to lift a watch and chain. A crowd is waiting for a train in the busy part of the day. At last it steams into the station, and there is a rush for the carriages. The thieves have marked down their prey, and rush after him. As he tries to open the carriage door he finds himself forced against the train by three or four men who are to all appearances anxious to get in. His arms as he reaches for the handle of the door are forced upwards. He is hustled this way and that. Suddenly the press ceases, and the men who were hustling him depart to seek other carriages. The victim gains his seat and the train moves out of the station. He wonders how many minutes late it may be, and attempts to consult his watch. His fingers find an empty pocket. The treasured possession has taken unto itself wings. The chain which adorned his waistcoat is no more—at least, so far as he is concerned. The pressing gentlemen at the carriage door have both in their possession. The long thumb-nail (described last week) and a smart pull has accounted for both. During the hustling process he had not felt the hands at his vest pocket. Now, a wiser man, he waits until the rush is over before he attempts to board a train.



The artful newsboy.

Somewhat similar is the dodge worked in large crowds. A man suddenly finds that his hat has been pushed forward over his eyes. He tries to replace it, and then finds that the pressure of the mob prevents him from lowering his arm. Again his hat moves, and the same process is repeated.

The flower-girl sneak thief.

From some unexplained cause or other the crowd commences to sway, and there is a lot of unnecessary pushing from behind. Quickly this subsides and peace again reigns. But the man whose hat moved had been neatly robbed by a combination of pickpockets, who, to work with more safety, had first moved the hat and then set up the rumpus in the crowd.

When the theatres pour their crowds of patrons into the streets at the close of the evening's performances the West-End of London is thronged with pickpockets, who can then be seen in all sorts of disguises.

At this hour of the night confusion reigns supreme in the Strand. Everyone seems anxious to get home and hurries to catch 'buses or trains, cabs or motors. And in the confusion the pickpockets reap their harvest. By assuming the rôle of newsvendors they are able to rush in and out of the crowd without causing any suspicion to enter the minds of the busy policemen. Apparently their one endeavour is to sell a few papers which they carry under their arm. The papers, however, are only used to cover the movements of the right hand. With the left hand the news-sheet is held close to the face of a gentleman, who is then quite unable to see that the seller's right hand is busy with his watch-chain. Sometimes, if the gentleman is wearing a breast-pin, the thief endeavours to relieve him of it by pushing the paper sharply upwards, so that it catches the pin, and if it is not fastened in the tie with some patent appliance it is odds upon the bit of jewellery being neatly "lifted."

Then, too, there is the female pickpocket who brings discredit upon an industrious and honest class by posing as a flower-girl. She carries the buttonholes for the sole purpose of covering the movements of her free hand, and when she spots a breast-pin which she thinks is worth lifting makes an effort to sell her wares with a persistency worthy of a better cause. The bunch of flowers are used in exactly the same way as the newspaper, and similar success attends the "operations" of the daring thieves.

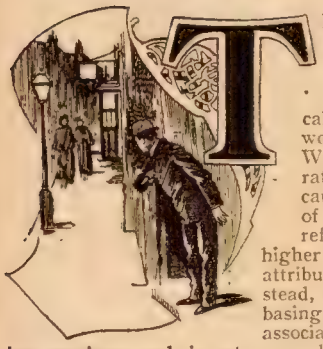
TO BE CONTINUED.

AN English gentleman, happening to be in Brecknockshire, used sometimes to divert himself with shooting, but being suspected not to be qualified by one of the little justices, his worship told him that unless he could produce his qualification he should not allow him to shoot there, adding that he had two little manors. "Yes, sir," said the Englishman; "anybody may perceive that." "Perceive what?" cried the Welshman. "That you have too little manners," said the other.

THE MADNESS of William Cooper

OVERCOME BY UNCONTROLLABLE JEALOUSY HE SLEW HIS FIRST SWEETHEART.

"'I shall dance at the dance this evening,'
The fair young dancer cried;
But e'er ever she danced that evening,
The fair young dancer died."
—Translation of a Bavarian Song.



THERE are some natures in no way mentally or morally distinguished, who are yet capable of nursing what we shall call, for want of a better word, an obstinate affection. We use the word obstinate, rather than enduring, because the particular species of affection to which we refer contains none of the higher and more ennobling attributes of great love, but instead, contains many of the debasing qualities that are usually associated with light and fleeting passions, and is yet more harmful than these light "loves" of a day or month, on account of its protracted duration. Such an affection as this is elusive, and evades description and analysis, but for all that it may safely be reckoned that such a passion as we propose to describe subsists rather upon the inherent obstinacy and contrariness in the "lover's" character than on any exalted or sustaining feelings of the heart; such a passion thrives upon disregard, and will positively bloom and flourish under aversion; in a word, such a passion is a fetish rather than a love.

William Cooper, as a boy, resided next door to Ellen Mather, a little girl of about the same age, and the children constantly played together. The parents of both the children were humble people, employed in a manufacturing town in the North of England, and when the fathers, who were fellow-workmen in the same factory, had concluded their day's work, they would frequently sit out in their back gardens and watch the two youngsters at their games.

Many jokes were passed at the expense of little William and little Ellen, but they were at present too young to notice or to take advantage of their fathers' jocularity.

One evening William introduced a youthful male friend to Ellen, and invited him to join the game. This particular game ended, as many of the children's games did, in an open fight between Ellen and William, and William's friend intervened on the lady's behalf.

"Don't you come between 'im and 'is girl, my boy," said old Mr. Cooper to the chivalrous young gentleman who had sustained a black eye in the combat, and who was promptly sent home to his mother, who likewise promptly thrashed him and sent him off to bed.

"Did you hear what my dad said just now?" said William, presently approaching the fair Ellen.

"No, what did he say?" she asked, with her mouth full of peppermint, and her eyes full of feminine curiosity.

"He said as 'ow you were my girl. You are, aren't you?"

"Don't you believe it; not me," replied Miss Mather, with a toss of her pretty head. But from that moment up to the hour of his death William Cooper persisted in believing, and acting in accordance with the belief, that Ellen was "his girl," although she never lost an opportunity of informing him to the contrary.

As the years passed, and William and Ellen grew to the glory of being in their "teens," the dissimilarity of their respective natures became more pronounced.

Ellen was rather a thin child, with very fair, straight hair, that hung in lank ringlets on either shoulder; she had rather pale blue eyes, a small tip-tilted nose, and a saucy mouth. Her complexion was disposed to be pale, but at the present juncture of her career her face was usually so besmeared with the remains of highly-coloured confectionery, and was so constantly used as a towel for hands that grubbed in the gutters for toys, peculiar rather than elegant, that the original hue of her cheeks was seldom on view. But all this presently changed; Ellen bought a bustle—at the time of which we write, a habit amongst all girls aspiring to be thought "grown-up"—had her hair cut short, and curled—another habit of the same description—and refused to acknowledge her former companions. She discarded peppermints and the wonderful prize-packets that put one in possession of a brass watch and some geranium-coloured sweetmeats for the modest sum of one halfpenny, and took to eating chocolates; she also, about this time, looked about for a "young man" with whom to walk out.

William filled this office at first, as Ellen always acted on the sound principle that it is foolish to despise small beginnings; but William, it must be observed, did not at all understand this. He thought that he was to be Ellen's first and last "beau"—a phrase then popular with young people—and dreamt of the day when he and "his girl" would be made one, receive a parson's blessing, and settle down to a life of homely domesticity. Miss Mather was quite unconscious of the hopeful thoughts that were thronging William's brain, and it was not until the young man had actually proposed to her that she became aware of the condition of his heart.

There are none so blind as those who will not see.

Miss Mather, on hearing his declaration, expressed, in terms more forcible than polite, the utter absurdity of such a proposition. She explained that she could never love him, could never, under any circumstances, look upon him as a possible lover.

"Still," continued this feminine platonist, "friendship is greater than love, and my friend, William, you can always be."

Young Cooper did not agree with the latter statement, opining to himself "that his girl was not treating him right."

Soon after this Ellen became acquainted with a man who wore imitation diamond rings, boasted "Lord Dundreary" whiskers, and smoked cheroots that were warranted to kill at a long distance. This individual wore a tall white hat cocked very much over his right eye, and carried a thin cane with a brass head.

He used to call Ellen "birdie darling," and "an awfully sweet young thing."

This vision of cheap dandyism dazzled the still unsophisticated eyes of fair Ellen, and she gave herself heart and soul to the inimitable cultivator of golden whiskers, the incomparable wearer of tight, striped pantaloons.

Shortly afterwards she met another gentleman who indulged in even more resplendent costume than her first "flame," and she gave herself heart and soul to him also.

Meanwhile, William regarded this generosity of Ellen's with ill-concealed jealousy.

He considered that she was his affianced bride, that she was unfaithful to him, and that he was an ill-used and wronged man. He protested to Ellen, humbly, persuasively, and violently, but she, on her part, declining to acknowledge that he spoke with any authority, turned a deaf ear to his mingled threats and solicitations. It was just after one of these meetings with Ellen that, sick and discomforted in spirit, William was met by a recruiting sergeant, who told him "tales" about the army.

The end of this was that William took the Queen's shilling, wrote affecting letters to Ellen, in which he said "she had broken his heart by her perfidy, and that all he could now look forward to was a soldier's grave," and was in due course sent out of the country on a troopship bound for "farthest India." Meanwhile, Ellen took little or no notice of his despairing letters, parted from him with a smile, and went on her way rejoicing in the company of various gentlemen to whom she had entrusted her heart and soul.

After a time, she went as barmaid to her cousin, a man of the same name as herself, who owned a public-house in Bolton. Here she was in her element, for, as queen of the bar, she received the homage and the expressed adulation of the numerous male customers who drank her cousin's whisky, while they related to the smiling Ellen the latest "good thing," and squeezed her hand.

Ellen herself always partook of "small ports," and the number of "small ports" that were consumed on the premises after her arrival, and were paid for by the amorous bar loungers, became quite astonishing.

But the host of the house also fell a victim to his fair cousin's charms; he made love to her with greater alacrity

than ceremony, and had extracted from her the promise of her hand before she quite realised what had happened. To tell the truth, she had accepted his proposal one night after closing time, when she was under the stimulating influences of numerous "small ports." However, the next morning, when she thought over the matter in sober earnestness, she could not but confess that she had made a very fair bargain. Mr. Mather was a man of good property and rising interests, besides which he was not of a jealous disposition, and would, as Ellen phrased it to a confidential lady friend, "give plenty of rope, don't you know."

So Miss Mather became Mrs. Mather, and there were celebrations and jubilations over the entry of the two Neophytes into the Court of Hymen.

In a year's time Ellen gave birth to a son, and in another year's time to a daughter.

"Anything for variety," as the Bolton wit remarked to her on her first appearance in the bar after the second joyful occasion.

Ellen, whom he found installed in the Bolton bar with three interesting children of tender ages.

As William entered, she was leaning over the bar engaged in a lively confidence with a tall man attired in sporting checks of so loud a pattern that they may be described as deafening. William thought she looked as pretty as ever, with her pearl and rose complexion, and her corn-coloured hair piled up upon her not ungraceful head. Little diamond ear-rings flashed in her tiny ears, and she was dressed with elegance, in a dress that trailed off with innumerable flounces.

But Cooper noticed that her hands, which were half-covered with gaudy rings, had grown red and coarse since he last saw her.

She did not recognise him at first, but at last burst out into exclamations of surprise and pleasure.

HER COMPANION SHRIEKED "MURDER" AT THE TOP OF HER VOICE.

Although weighted with the cares of maternity and matrimony, Ellen was as lively as ever with her customers; indeed, so lively that at times her lord and master felt himself called upon to remonstrate with her, and then "high words"—which often, however, attained to no greater altitude than the level of the gutter—passed between husband and wife.

All this time William Cooper had been serving his country in India. He suffered a severe attack of enteric fever, and while in hospital, spent his less lucid moments in raving over the way "his girl in England had treated him."

He kept an old, half-obliterated photo of Ellen always with him, and took great delight in showing this to his friends, and descanting upon his woes, the many afflictions of the heart which he had endured through the falsity and frailty of the portrait's original.

Constancy is not one of the soldier's most conspicuous merits, and William grew to be regarded as one of the bright lights of his regiment, a standing instance of male fidelity to "faithless woman."

He was invalided home, and after some short time bought himself out of the army, and settled down to the more prosaic business of brass-fitter and joiner.

On his arrival in England he did not neglect to seek out

"Oh, my! if it ain't Sweet William!" she cried, and gave him a kiss of welcome. Afterwards, she invited him behind the bar, and introduced him to her husband and the three interesting children.

But William would have none of this; his was an uncompromising nature; he argued that Ellen had been faithless to him in her marriage, and he took a hasty and unceremonious leave of Ellen and her household.

Shortly afterwards he married a woman to whom he was almost a stranger, and wrote to Ellen saying "that perhaps she would be sorry for what she had done now."

It will seem from this, and the general tenor of his conduct, that the insane idea that Ellen was and had been morally bound to him by some irrevocable tie was as firmly fixed in his mind as ever. There was certainly a strain of madness in this persistent delusion, and it is worthy of notice, because when William had cut Ellen's throat, and he was on his trial for murder, the plea of insanity was brought forward by the defence.

William Cooper, as might have been predicted, was unhappy with his wife; his thoughts were always running on Ellen, and he, unfortunately, had a habit of talking in his sleep, so it can well be understood that Mrs. Cooper soon had

grounds for jealous fears. Likewise, the married life of the Mathers did not progress as favourably as might have been wished.

Ellen, tired of matrimonial bonds and the ties of maternity, was in no way satisfied with the admiration of her spouse, and longed for a more extensive field in which to gather the flowers of adulation that blossomed forth everywhere at sight of her charms. She flirted outrageously with "all and sundry," the result being quarrels with her husband, who demanded explanations and got none, and who insisted upon an alteration in his wife's conduct, and who was laughed at for his pains. After some considerable lapse of time, William Cooper moved into Bolton. He told Mrs. Cooper that business would be better there, but the real reason that prompted the removal was that he wished to be near Ellen.

The man knew well—must have known—that she could never be anything to him—past events afforded ample evidence of this fact—but so constantly was the woman in his thoughts, torturing with her presence his every moment, that he found he could not exist without being able to feast his eyes upon her. "In Bolton," he argued, "I shall see her often, and then—who knows!"

Obstinate, insensible man! The fact can hardly be credited, but for all its seeming impossibility it is none the less true that he even now cherished a secret hope that Ellen might learn to love him, and that he and she might in the kisses of the present obliterate the memory of the wasted and unprofitable past.

He had not been in Bolton a day before he went to that house of refreshment that was presided over by the unforgettable Ellen, the playmate of his childhood, the dream of his youth, the despair of his maturity.

She was pleased to see him, greeted him with cordiality, and asked him into the back parlour, where, she said, she had something of importance to communicate.

"Since I have seen you, William," said she, "I have suffered a terrible loss."

"A loss! What is it, Ellen?"

"I have been deserted."

"Deserted! I do not understand."

"My husband has left me. He has taken the children with him, and is now on his way to America."

William poured into her ears all the consolation he had at his command. He would be her friend, he would support her in any difficulty that might arise. He had known her from a child; who had such a right, then, to look after her interests and welfare?

When he left her, however, he could not help giving way to a feeling of exultation at the accident which had freed Ellen and cleared the road for his own progress to her heart.

Blind, infatuated creature that he was, he still believed that Ellen would be his, and that the saying of his dead father, that she was "his girl," would be justified at last.

The next evening, as he was going into the bar, he was stopped at the door by a somewhat decrepit individual attired in a seedy ulster and a faded slouch hat.

"I want to speak with you," said the man to William.

"Well, what is it?"

"I can tell you something you don't know. I can tell you a lot," said the old fellow, waving his hands melodramatically.

"Indeed, and what can you tell me?" answered Cooper, rather amused.

"About her, about our Nelly," said his interlocutor, pointing with his thumb towards the bar. "I'm a Bohemian, you know; I'm only old Tim the Actor. Nobody takes much notice of me, but I sit in that bar and see a lot and hear a lot, and I can tell you why her husband went away."

Cooper was now all interest.

"Let us walk down the street," said he, "and tell me all you know."

Saying which, he dropped a shilling into the hand of this degenerate son of Thespis.

"Why did her husband go? I'll tell you. She was unfaithful to him—openly, glaringly, unfaithful to him—with a man it was said she had known in former years."

Cooper was for a moment quite dazed with the news.

"Are you sure of it?" he said presently.

"Sure, my dear sir; old Tim is always sure of what he says. But ask any frequenter of the house; they will all tell you the same. It was a matter of public gossip."

Cooper said no more; he left the ancient actor to his own devices, and hurried back into the bar, where he saw Ellen, as usual, surrounded by a group of casual admirers.

He brushed them aside with little ceremony.

"I must speak to you, Ellen," he said, "at once; it is important."

"All right, Willie," replied the lady, and led the way into the back parlour.

He shut the door behind with a bang, and stood before it with lowering brows and clenched hands, regarding her with anger and scorn.

"Ellen, you lied to me!"

"Lied! What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? Enough of this; I know all. I know your husband left you because you were unfaithful to him. Oh, you miserable wretch! You——"

The words stung the woman into a temper.

"Look here, William, you've no reason to carry on like this. What am I to you, I should like to know? What have I ever been to you, eh? Nothing!"

"Yes, yes; I know, I know! But, tell me, Ellen, do you love this man, whoever he is? Tell me?"

The woman broke into a little laugh. She went to the piano, and began to play over a little tune, humming the

"I have been deserted."

while to herself, and looking up into William's intense face with an amused and pretty smile.

It pleased her to see that William was as desperately in love with her as ever. It was a compliment to the endurance of her charms.

She began to sing and to speak to him alternatively with a little mocking voice that cut into his heart like a knife.

"'He isn't a marrying man, my love'—no, William, I can't say that it was a case of love—'He lives on a different plan, my love'—you see, I had had plenty of fizz, and I was on for a lark—'Keep out of his way if you can, my love.' That's about all, I think, except that the old man found out and cut up rough—'Oh, he isn't a marrying man.'"

Cooper rushed over and dragged her from the music-stool. She was too startled to cry out, and the next moment he unloosened his grasp.

"Stop your idiotic songs, you shameless creature; torture me no more! I hate you, I loathe you, I despise—and yet—— Oh, curse you, Ellen, why do I love you so much? I wish to God I had the strength to kill you!"

He fled from her presence, laughing wildly, dashed through the bar, scattering glasses and customers on his way, and ran and ran through the streets like a man possessed of devils.

Presently he grew quieter, and tried to reason himself out of his hopeless passion.

"I must conquer it," said he; "I must learn to subdue. She is worthless—utterly lost to all decency. God! why does she torture me like this? Why am I ever thinking of her, knowing her to be—what she is?"

And then, as he paced the lonely streets, with his brain whirling with passion and jealousy, and his heart torn and lacerated by the vehemence of his own emotions, a sudden thought came into his brain that chilled the very marrow in his bones.

Why not kill Ellen? Once dead, she could no longer torture him with her flippant wantonness; his peace and happiness would be no longer destroyed by the sight of her adorable, her detestable, beauty. She would be dead, and clay is unoffending.

Cooper strove to banish these terrible reflections from his mind; he struggled and fought with them, and still they possessed him.

At last he crept home, and lay down shivering on the bed, utterly exhausted by the mental adventures of the evening.

Let us now return to Ellen Mather. She had up till now regarded Cooper's passion for her with amused tolerance; sometimes it diverted her, sometimes it only annoyed her, but after the scene in the parlour she became afraid of him. His violence, his strange utterances, and his threatening demeanour were all impressed vividly upon her mind, and engendered a certain apprehension of possible evil arising out of William's lawless passion within her bosom.

"Well," she reflected, "he said he would never see me again. Perhaps he will keep away. So much the better."

William had also vowed to himself that he would never again set eyes upon what was to him the soul-torturing beauty of Ellen, and yet within two days she received from him a letter couched in the most penitent terms, and bleared by tears, begging of her to forgive him, and promising that he would always be docile and unoffending in the future.

"Poor old chap!" said Ellen, "I suppose I must forgive him. He is a bit of a nuisance, though."

So William was taken back into Ellen's favour, and was allowed to sit in the bar, look upon his divinity, and treat her to "small ports" to his heart's content.

All went smoothly until the night preceding St. Patrick's Day, in the year 1879.

Bolton was preparing for annual festivities. There were many Irishmen in the town, and they promised to make things lively for at least one night in the twelve months. A ball was to be given at the Assembly Rooms, together with a concert and a supper, and the master of the ceremonies was to be a man named O'——, who, although formerly a resident in Bolton, had been absent for some months, and had only returned a week before.

On the 16th of March, Cooper, as usual, was in the bar, waiting for Ellen to come in, when he chanced to hear the conversation of old Tim and another habitué of the house in question.

"Is the missus going to the ball, Tim?" asked the actor's friend.

"Going! Why, of course she is! Isn't O'—— there? Wasn't it through him her husband left her? Isn't he master of the ceremonies? Oh, they'll have a fine time, you bet! I'm only old Tim, the Bohemian, and I don't mind these little things, but if I was in love with that girl, mark you, I say if—yes. Irish hot, with pleasure!"

Cooper felt himself turn cold as he listened to this conversation. Ellen going to the ball to meet her paramour, to dance with him, and to flirt with him!

The idea was horrible to him, although he knew he could never be anything more to Ellen than the most casual customer who ordered gin and bitters and squeezed her hand when she handed the change.

When Ellen came down he spoke to her of what he had heard.

"Is it true? Are you going?"

She rested her elbows on the counter and her face on her hands, and gave him an enigmatical smile.

"P'r'aps I will, p'r'aps I won't. Can't see as how it matters to you."

"It does, it does; that man will be there. I know all about it. Tell me you won't go! Oh, Ellen, you know I love you!"

She giggled loudly, and beckoned to a man with grey hair and a dilapidated military appearance, who was drinking rum in a corner.

"Come here, colonel," said she; "here's another of the boys got the old complaint. Give him your advice."

The man bowed with mock gallantry.

"Ah, sweet damsel, have we not all lost our hearts to thee long ago? Mine is dead—dead, sir, dead! It withered like a rose when she boxed my ears one day, because I said I'd be a father to her."

The entire bar burst into loud laughter at this sally of "the colonel's."

"Nice sort of father I reckon you'd make!" said Ellen.

And then—but Cooper stayed to hear no more. He fled disgusted with the whole scene, and tortured with the thought that to-morrow evening Ellen would be in the arms of her lover.

He did not sleep for the thought all night, and the next day the Festival of St. Patrick found him haggard and depressed.

"I can bear it no longer," he said to himself; "she shall not go to the ball to-night. I will kill her first!"

He went into the bar, and slunk into a corner, waiting for Ellen to come down. The place was crowded with men, most of them in a state of semi-intoxication.

Presently the door at the back of the bar opened, and Ellen came out—Ellen, as William had never seen her before—Ellen, looking radiantly beautiful in a pale green evening dress, cut rather low, with lace in abundance, a fan, and a star in her hair.

A shout greeted her entry.

"What do you think of me, boys? How do I go?" cried Ellen.

"Beautiful!—charming! Oh, my eyesight!" These and various other laudatory remarks, many of them of a character it would not be permissible to here reproduce, were thrown at the girl.

Old Tim took hold of "the colonel" round the waist, and the pair began to dance and sing:

"Oh, she's going to the dance this evening,
This evening, this evening;
She's going to the dance this evening,
She's going to the dance—hooray!"

The entire room shouted and chanted the chorus, and William, unseen and unnoticed, slipped out of the bar.

"Going to the dance, is she!" he muttered; "well, we will see!"

He took out a large clasp-knife that he always carried, and felt the edge of the blade with his thumb.

"Nice and sharp; couldn't be better!"

He put the knife up the sleeve of his coat, keeping his hand on the handle, and, moving away from the lights of the public-house, loitered in the doorway of an empty house.

People passed, laughing, joking, and singing. It was St. Patrick's day, and the town was jubilant.

Then the watchful William saw two women in evening dresses, with cloaks thrown over their shoulders, walking towards him.

He buttoned up his coat and stepped out of his hiding-place right in the path.

It was Ellen and the assistant-barmaid on their way to the ball.

The woman did not at first recognise William, but he called her by her name.

"Why, Will, is it you?" said she.

"Yes. Are you going to the ball?"

"Of course!"

"To meet that man! You shall not go!"

"Nonsense! I'm on for a lark to-night. Come, too; lots of fun."

He stood aside as if to let her pass, and as she did so he stepped behind her, threw his left arm round her, and dragged her to her knees.

She gave a faint scream.

He whipped out the knife, and drove the flashing blade deep into her all-exposed bosom, and as he drew it out the warm blood spurted all over his face; then he stabbed her again in the neck.

She did not scream; she only groaned now, but her companion shrieked "Murder! murder!" at the top of her voice.

William threw down the bloodstained knife. A constable attracted to the spot by the cries of murder rushed up and seized him by the collar.

He made no resistance, and, indeed, did not speak until they were about to escort him to the station, when he said:

"Let me kiss her once. I loved her so."

They hurried him away.

And then Ellen, very near to death—Ellen, in all her garish finery—Ellen, in her pale green evening dress, "made specially for the occasion," and now drenched with the woman's life-blood, was taken up from the pavement and conveyed to the hospital.

"He's a bad 'un!" she whispered to one of the nurses. "I hope he suffers for it!"

She died soon afterwards.

William was brought up before the magistrates the next morning, when he preserved a stolid and reserved demeanour. His friends procured him a solicitor, who, when he was sent for trial, engaged experienced counsel on his behalf.

The defence said that he had suffered a mental injury while in India from which he had never recovered, that he was drunk at the time of the crime, and moreover that he acted upon an uncontrollable impulse.

The prosecution said little beyond recounting the facts.

The jury said he was guilty of murder, and he was sentenced to be hanged.

He expressed no sorrow for his crime, no contrition for his horrible deed; he was stolid and reserved to the last.

But when he was walking to the gallows he made the following statement, which to our mind is illuminative:

"I'm glad I did it," he said. "She tortured me because I loved her, and she did not care for me. I'm glad I did it. I could not bear her to live any longer, although she was really my girl, you know."

His girl! To the last he continued in that obstinate delusion.

A large crowd heralded the hoisting of the black flag in silence, and perhaps it is better for us to emulate their example, to refrain from wordy judgment, but to leave the two principal characters in this strange tragedy in the silence of their eternal sleep.

The Innocent Hanged!

THE most recent case of the execution of absolutely innocent persons, which has actually been proved to have been a miscarriage of justice, was that of the infliction of the capital penalty on the men accused of the murder of Margaret Marsden and Hannah Partington, at Pendleton, in Lancashire, in April, 1817. Five men were accused of this terrible crime, their names being James Ashcroft, Daniel Ashcroft, James Ashcroft, junior, William Holden, and John Robinson. At the Assizes a fairly circumstantial case was made out against the first four of these, and they were duly hanged on the 9th of September in the same year.

Twenty-six years elapsed, and then, when on his deathbed, a man named John Holden confessed that he was the real murderer, and that the four "criminals" who had been suddenly cut off from this earth were innocent. Careful investigation followed, and it was proved that an awful miscarriage of justice had taken place.

The notorious burglar and murderer, Charles Peace, very nearly sent an innocent man to his grave in the person of Habron, whom he actually heard condemned to death, and who languished for two years in penal servitude—the extreme penalty having been commuted—till the audacious little villain confessed, when almost beneath the shadow of the gallows, that he was the actual murderer of Constable Cock.

Another case in which the extension of the Royal clemency prevented an innocent man being sent to a dishonoured grave was that of Pellizioni, an Italian, who was tried in 1865 before Baron Martin for the murder of a fellow-countryman at Saffron Hill. After the verdict had been given the learned judge said that a clearer case had never come before him, and he was perfectly certain that the accused had committed the murder; thereupon he sentenced the culprit to death. Owing to some hitch in the proceedings, Pellizioni was respited for a short time, and in the interval a man named Gregorio confessed that he was the actual perpetrator of the murder, and in 1865 the innocent man was granted a free pardon, while Gregorio was sent into penal servitude.

Many other cases in which innocent persons have been sentenced to die will recur to the student of criminology, but the above will suffice to show our readers that it is not safe to trust always to the findings of a jury. The late Chief Baron Kelly said that between 1802 and 1840 no less than twenty-two innocent persons had been sentenced to death, of whom seven had perished on the scaffold! It must be remembered, however, that in those days the period between sentence and execution was very short, and persons were hanged for comparatively trivial offences. None the less, these figures make one think a good deal as to whether it is advisable for the death penalty to be inflicted on purely circumstantial evidence, and whether the rule which obtains in many European countries of insisting on the culprit admitting his guilt before he is led to the scaffold should not be enforced in England.

THE HOLLINWOOD HORROR

A Fiendish Atrocity.

"To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemned alike to groan,
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own."
—GRAY.

ON Saturday, March 12, 1831, at the Lancaster Spring Assizes, one of the most atrocious cases of outrage and murder ever committed was heard.

This was a most aggravated case of the repeated violation and subsequent death of an aged woman on the road from Oldham to Manchester.

Ashton Worrall (25), William Worrall (38), and Robert Chadderton (22) were charged with the wilful murder of Sarah McCrinn, at Oldham, on December 22, 1830. The indictment comprehended a great number of counts; plans of the locality where the crime was alleged to have been committed were supplied to the jury. Able counsel appeared for prosecution and defence, and the court was crowded, but by members of the male sex only.

Mrs. Bridget Cheetham, old Mrs. Sarah McCrinn's married daughter at Oldham, sat anxiously expecting the arrival of her aged mother. Mrs. Cheetham had invited her mother, brother, and sisters to eat their Christmas dinner with her "man" and herself, and the mother had promised to come on this evening of the 22nd to assist in the preparations and cooking for a joyous Yuletide.

But "l'homme propose et le Dieu dispose," as our French neighbours say, and little Bride Cheetham (named, like her mother, after one of Erin's patron saints) had sickened that very morning, and thus added to Mrs. Cheetham's cares, for she had much anxiety on her child's account. For the same reason, moreover, her mother's advent was eagerly desired.

Eight o'clock sounded from the quaint, old-fashioned cuckoo clock perched high up on the wall, and the pitiful plaints of the sick child upstairs, roused by the sound, struck on the watcher's ear, and caused her to exclaim querulously, as she rose to go upstairs:

"Saints protect us! that old fool of a clock has wakened Bride. The doctor said, 'Let her sleep as much as she can.' I wish I had stopped the old cuckoo! But I'll e'en go up and gi' the bairn a sup o' cold tay."

She did so, and regained her seat by the fire just as a heavy step arrested itself at the door.

"Ah, here's Bob! I am glad! He is a good chap."

The latch was lifted and the door opened, letting in a blast of cold wind; but the visitor was not, as the woman had hoped, her husband, Bob Cheetham, but a woman of about her own age, in the usual attire of a mill-hand.

"Ah, Norah Mahony!" cried Mrs. Cheetham, springing up; "'tis meself is glad to see ye! Sure, ye're a welcome woman this night!"

"Bekase ye're all alone, alanna?" queried the visitor with a smile. "Where's yer man?"

"In the same kind of place as yer Tim Mahony is, I reckon. Sure, they're both broths of boys, and make the money fly when the drink's afore them."

"They'll do that," assented Mrs. Mahony. "But it isn't me who'll begrudge the boys a bit of enjoyment, and it's a poor heart that would do so—not yours, I'm sure, Bridget Cheetham."

"I don't know, Norah," responded the other woman

dubiously. "I never touch a drop of the crathur meself, and phwat does a man want wi' the drink any more than his wife?"

"I don't know, Bridget," returned Mrs. Mahony with a laugh. "Ask Father Alphonsus whin ye next go to confession."

"Who are ye pokin' fun at, alanna?" and joined in the laugh. "But I'm worried all round. Little Bride is taken very sick, and I fear 'tis her throat again, and I might want to send for the doctor. I told Bob this mornin' that she was ailing, and he ought to be at home. Then I'm expecting me mother from Bolton. She promised to be here to-day to help prepare for me Christmas party."

"But, surely, she ought to have arrived before this?"

"That's just what I'm thinking, my dear."

"How was she coming? Anybody promised her a lift? The carrier, perhaps."

On the 22nd of the previous December the old woman left her home at Bolton to proceed to Oldham to visit her daughter there. Before starting Mrs. McCrinn borrowed of a neighbour a cloak, gown, and stockings. On this trifling piece of harmless vanity of an aged woman—the desire to look respectable in the eyes of her child—much, as will be seen, hung. There is an old English saying which avers that "murder will out," and the slight clue of borrowed clothes was enough to fit halters to two atrocious criminals.

Mrs. McCrinn had proceeded on her journey to a point about twelve miles from Bolton and six from Oldham by between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. This was testified by one Thomas Jones, who was a watchman at Newton Heath, and who, on the evening of December 22, a few minutes after nine o'clock, saw a woman who was passing on foot. She was a "low-set" (short) woman, and appeared from her speech to be an Irishwoman. She stepped

BUT HE STUCK IN THE CELL WINDOW.

"Oh, no; it's long after his time. I've no doubt mother will pad the hoof; she'll have to walk it."

"It's a long stretch for a woman of her years."

"It's that; and, poor soul! I fear she's none too fit. She's had bad times o' late, and been welly clemmed."

"But, sure, Bridget, ye'd not let the mother want?"

"Well, Norah, ma man's a good chap, and if the ould lass lived here Bob would never deny her the bit and sup; but work's been slack, and brass has been scanty, and it's little hard cash I find to handle."

"Ah, I suffer from the same complaint! It's a long walk and a dull road, and I hope Mrs. McCrinn 'll soon glad yer eyes by the sight o' hers. I trust, too, that your dear little Bride will soon be well."

And the kindly neighbour took her leave.

At the trial, Mr. Starkie, for the prosecution, stated the case to the jury. From his statement it appeared that the deceased, with whose murder the three prisoners stood accused, was upwards of sixty-four years of age, and the wife of a labourer living at Bolton.

off the flags, and Jones asked her what made her do so, and she said she was rather light in the head. She was, she said, going to see her daughter at Oldham. At this time Robert Lees came up as Jones was talking to the woman. He went on, and she followed him towards Oldham. She was sober. Jones was subsequently taken to see the poor old woman's corpse at Newton Church, and he immediately identified her as the woman with whom he had been speaking.

Lees, whom the deceased accompanied, testified that they walked about one and a-half miles together, but the woman went faint and could not keep up with him, so he left her at the canal bridge and pushed on.

A Mrs. Moon stated that between nine and ten o'clock deceased called at her cottage on the Oldham Road for a drink of water, which was given to her.

She was followed by land surveyor Schofield. He had been surveying some fields off "The Street," the remains of an old Roman road, but now unused, when he discovered the body of the deceased woman in a ditch. Her skirts were

drawn up, so that her person was exposed from the waist downwards. There was a little blood around her mouth and a scratch above one knee, but he did not realise that she had met a violent death.

Mr. Newton, a surgeon, certified that at the autopsy he found some extravasated blood on the brain, but, having no suspicion of murder, considered it a case of apoplexy and accidental death.

It further came out that, a few days after the occurrence of the circumstances described, two young men—Ashton Hutton and William Mellor—were found in possession of a cloak which it was proved the deceased had worn when she quitted Bolton, and which was the one she had borrowed of her neighbour for the journey. At their examination they were acquitted, but facts came out which implicated the present prisoners and led to their apprehension.

Hutton now testified that, on the evening of December 22, he, with the two Worralls and others, were drinking at a public-house on the road from Manchester to Oldham. Witness and the two Worralls left the house at about 9.30 o'clock, and crossed some fields on their way to "The Street." When they reached the hedge dividing these fields from "The Street" Hutton heard a woman's voice over the hedge exclaim, "Oh, dear me, this will never do!"

This was in a tone of anger and fear.

There was a short interval. Then came a ringing cry of "Murder!"

There was a murmur of deeper tones, and then the woman's voice panted:

"Oh, dear me! surely you will not abuse an old woman so? For heaven's sake, think of your own mothers!"

Then followed a succession of cries of "Murder! Murder!"

Hutton got to the hedge. Looking over, he saw three men hold the old woman down and successively violate her. Two of them, he was sure, were the Worralls, and he thought the third was Chadderton; but he did not see his face, so was not sure, and would not swear to him.

The woman was now silent and motionless, and her assailants threw the poor old woman's corpse in the ditch between "The Street" and the fields which they had crossed, where Mr. Schofield, the surveyor, subsequently discovered it.

Then they all, said Hutton, went on together as far as Ashton Coast, where a man passed them. The younger Worrall, who appeared to be carrying something under his coat, went up to this man, and Hutton heard him say:

"Here, take this, and say nothing about it."

Hutton remarked that he would gladly have assisted the miserable victim if he could, but he was only one against three, and he was much afraid of Ashton Worrall.

Another witness, named Berry, assistant to Mr. Schofield, the surveyor, who found the corpse of the murdered woman, said that shortly after the body had been found Ashton Worrall came into the field.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "Is it true that a dead woman has been found here?"

"Yes," responded Berry.

"Where?"

Berry pointed to the ditch.

"D——n it!" groaned Worrall; "I wish that I had never had anything to do with her!"

Other evidence proved that the cries of "Murder!" had been heard at the time stated.

Prisoners pleaded entire innocence, and Chadderton proved a satisfactory alibi.

The jury, without retiring, gave a verdict of "Guilty."

The judge, dwelling solemnly on the unparalleled atrocity of the crime, sentenced the Worralls to death, the execution to take place on the following Monday.

When the prisoners were going out of the dock a good-looking young woman, the wife of Ashton Worrall, leaped upon the seat outside the crier's box, and, extending her hands to her husband, begged to take farewell of him, as she should never see him more. The gaoler informed her that she could see him next day. The poor, excited woman was, however, incredulous, and her prolonged shrieks and lamentations were heartrending in the extreme.

The trial commenced at nine o'clock in the morning, and did not terminate until after ten at night. The court was crowded to excess during the whole of the time.

Thus cast for death as they were, the two Worralls found hope even in the condemned cell, and, indeed, nearly slipped from the grasp of justice, which fell out in this manner:

At that period, when the death penalty was inflicted for so many crimes, the number of the condemned was far too great to allow each convict the luxury of a separate cell. Thus it fell that the brothers Worrall found themselves together and two new inmates brought by the gaoler to share their quarters. These were Isaac Holland and Jonathan Dade, who had been convicted of a bill forgery on the preceding Monday and were sentenced to death.

The Worralls, glad of any distraction of their gloomy thoughts, welcomed the new-comers heartily.

"I don't intend to stretch a rope," said Isaac Holland, after carefully examining the cell.

"Have ye any chance of a reprieve? Got some swell friend, perhaps?"

"Nary one. But I'll not be in this stone-jug long."

"I wish I could say the same," said Ashton Worrall dolorously.

"Well, so you can, mate, if you're not too white-livered. Only follow your leader—that's me."

And winking at Jonathan Dade, Holland drew from his clothing a jagged piece of steel, forming a rough saw. With this he attacked one of the iron window stanchions, and occasionally relieved by his fellow-prisoners, soon had an opening sufficiently large to pass through. Dade and Holland, both spare men, crept through, and, by the aid of their blankets, descended safely, the Worralls pushing after them a wooden shelf about 6ft. long, which was in the cell. The fugitives then got on the top of a place of convenience, and from the top of a large water-butt gained the roof and eventually, by the aid of the board, got into a window in the old tower near the governor's house.

They then put one end of the board on the window-sill and the other on the wall, fixed to the spikes on the latter the rope which they had twisted of their blankets, comforters, stockings, etc., etc., and, climbing down this on the outside of the wall, the two, whose plans had been seconded by Mrs. Dade, got clean away, an escape which created great sensation.

Meanwhile, the Worralls were less successful. They were both—but especially William—much stouter men than the two enterprising fugitives. William, the elder, insisted on passing out first, but he stuck in the window until the gaoler, entering, frustrated the Worralls' hopes.

At eight o'clock on March 14 Ashton Worrall and William Worrall were executed behind the Lancaster gaol, with Moses Fernly, who was also executed at the same time for the murder of his stepson.

In the interval between passing sentence and the execution the two Worralls stoutly persisted in declaring themselves innocent of the crime. The other prisoner also, on being taken back from the prison to his cell, asserted his innocence, but did not subsequently confess or deny his guilt.

The men were brought out for execution about 8.30 o'clock, in the presence of two thousand or three thousand spectators. The culprits walked on to the scaffold with a rapid but tolerably firm step.

Ashton Worrall, before the cap was drawn over his face, once or twice turned round and gazed wildly on the crowd beneath. Whilst the clergyman was reading the Burial Service Ashton Worrall was constantly exclaiming, with a loud voice, "Lord, have mercy on me!" adding repeatedly, "I am innocent as a child!"

He afterwards commenced repeating, with a loud voice, the Apostles' Creed, but before he had concluded it the drop fell, and the three men passed away.

The two Worralls appeared to die instantly, but Fernly, who trembled violently in every limb from the moment he was brought out till the drop fell, struggled very much for three or four minutes, and appeared to suffer a great deal of pain.

Ben Jonson's Honest Lawyer.

BEN JONSON was once passing a churchyard in Surrey, when he perceived several people weeping round a grave, and on asking one of them, a woman, what they were crying for, she replied: "We have lost our precious lawyer, Justice Randall. He kept us all in peace, and was always so good as to keep us from going to law—the best man that ever lived!" "Well," remarked Jonson, "I will give you an epitaph to write upon the tomb," and he wrote the following:

"God works wonders now and then;
Here lies a lawyer—an honest man."

A CERTAIN poor, unfortunate gentleman was so often pulled by the sleeve by the bailiffs that he was in continual apprehension of them, and going one day through Tavistock Street, his coat-sleeve happened to hitch upon the iron spike of the rails, whereupon he immediately turned round in great surprise, and exclaimed, "At whose suit, sir—at whose suit?"

The Murder of Margarette.

HOW A SCOUNDREL NAMED RENNEL SEDUCED AND SLEW A SWEET SWISS MAIDEN.

"Oh horrible! that maid so simply sweet
Should have been brought to such untimely end;
That murthercus hands with horrid instruments,
Should savagely obliterate her beauty,
And so deface God's handiwork."
—From "The Brothers" (An old tragedy ascribed to Nicolas Rowe)

THERE is always snow on the Swiss mountains. Spring succeeds winter and summer spring, and still the eternal snow shines on undisturbed by the golden languors of July — vast stretches of shimmering, all-glorious snow, gradually rising and rising, until its topmost peaks are obscured in the clouds.

Some of these mountains are of such stupendous height that an imaginative writer might speak of them as piercing the floors of heaven, and they form a mighty bulwark for the independence of the Swiss nation and a great and effective background for romance and tragedy.

Clad as they ever are in a shining and glimmering peace, apparelled in a robe of unstained and dazzling purity, these vast, gigantic mountain ranges could, if nature bestowed upon them the gift of speech, tell of strange tragedies that have happened in their midst. Armies—entire armies—have perished before now in the cold wildernesses of the snow mountains, those broad, all-spacious, and glittering wildernesses, that shimmer with a crystalline radiance beneath the ardent glances of sun; how much of classic chivalry lies beneath their flowerless plains? Stout limbs and valiant hearts, that went to make the manhood of the world, all lost, all dead, all rotting, unseen and long forgotten. Yes, the snow mountains have their secrets, which we shall never know, secrets for ever locked in their unfathomable bosoms.

But there are other tragedies which have occurred latterly in Switzerland, minor individual tragedies, and it is one of these that we propose to relate. It is a tale of love and crime, violent, and unusual in many of its circumstances, a picture of dark deeds and terrible passions that is in striking contrast to the serene tranquillity of the snowy heights that are ever present in our narrative, and, indeed, form our story's background and provide for it environment.

Twenty-five years ago there lived in a small Swiss village a young girl, named Margarette Voegli.

She was extremely beautiful, and yet sublimely unconscious of her attractions, a fact which lent to undoubted comeliness an added charm and a subtler fascination.

She was of medium height, with a slight, unripe figure. Her complexion was the fairest imaginable; her hair was brown and wavy, and hung in unadorned clusters around a small, oval face, illumined by eyes of the deepest and the most unfathomable blue.

Such a character as Margarette could not exist in a large industrial town or trading city; such characters are found, "like angels' visits, few and far between." They are like flowers, and need a fertile soil from which to blossom, and balmy winds and the kisses of the sun. For the Margarettes of this world are the daughters of Nature, the children of sunshine and beauty, that can no more thrive under foreign influences than—if such an impossibility can be imagined—a wild rose could blossom from the pavement of a London street.

When Margarette was seventeen she still possessed the heart of a child; her mind still remained unsullied by an impure thought. She had grown in loveliness and goodness, and had managed to keep intact childhood's ethereal spirit, untainted by the grossness of the world and its way. But what did Margarette know of the world? The village was her world; the confines of her universe were bounded by the canton's surrounding forests, and her heaven rested on the top of those white, glorious, snow-clad summits up to which her dreaming eyes were ever turned.

Her days were passed in working in her mother's tiny house and in playing with the village children and her girl friends. Sometimes old Hans, the ancient of the village, would drive her in his sleigh right out into other valleys and neighbouring villages, through those magic woods of mystery and enchantment.

These were times of great enjoyment, and Margarette counted herself the happiest girl in the world.

The tinkling of sleigh-bells and a young girl's laughter!

How emblematic it was of young life and innocent pleasure this mingled music of light-hearted merriment. Alas! it was but the prelude to the thunderstorm of tragedy—the storm that was fated to engulf in its violence Margarette and to silence for ever her laughter and songs and dreams.

Margarette at seventeen was very romantic—and what girl at that age is not?—romantic and full of ideals and of budding hopes.

She was always staring up at the snow on the mountain ridges, flame-coloured in the noon sunshine and scintillating with a thousand gorgeous hues, wondering what the snow would bring her; for there was a legend which the girl knew that said that all young people who loved the snow would one day receive from it a priceless gift.

Well, the snow brought to Margarette——

But we must not anticipate; there are other things to be told before we reach the crime in the wood, and we must retrace our steps.

Margarette, as we have said, spent many of her hours staring up at the mountains, and at night she could often be seen leaning out of her casement window, with her beautiful hair unknotted and falling in luxuriant abundance about her pure, sweet face, gazing up at the glittering mountain-tops, the innumerable stars that studded the heavens, and the pale, solitary moon, that shed waning beams upon the peaks, and transformed the snow into fairy flowers of glittering splendour.

Snow, moonshine, and dreams!

Margarette's mind was filled with nothing else, for as yet she had not tasted reality, and she was but a visionary young creature to whom the fairies were as alive and as actual as her neighbours.

At this time she longed for a lover, longed for the romantic knight of the story-book to step out of its pages and make her his princess. She had no impure or sexual thought, but simply pined for an imaginary hero—a man immaculate—upon whom to bestow her love and constancy. Her hero was not long in coming.

One day, as she was driving out in old Hans's sleigh, a young man stepped out of the village inn and watched her passing.

"Who is that?" he inquired of the landlord, who had saluted Margarette with a smile and a nod.

"That! Oh, that's Margarette Voegli. A beautiful girl, eh?"

"Truly a beautiful girl!" said the stranger.

"And a good girl, too, I warrant you," added the garrulous host.

"Doubtless, doubtless," agreed the stranger, and relapsed into silence. He appeared to think no more about the matter, and when the landlord again mentioned Margarette he did not respond.

The stranger was a tall, powerfully-built man, with a handsome face, flashing black eyes, and a crop of rather long curly hair. He was clean-shaven, and his mouth, which was large and full-lipped, gave a certain sensual air to a face otherwise prepossessing. The stranger's name was Christian Rennel, and he came from the far-away village of Sursee, in Lucerne.

He was travelling for a holiday, and had been an occupant of the village inn two days before he first saw Margarette.

He went out for a walk during that evening, and, turning into one of the little side-paths that led into the heart of the adjacent woods, he came face to face with the girl he had seen that afternoon in the sleigh.

Margarette, surprised to meet a stranger—always an unusual experience in such an isolated spot, and at once calculated to rouse considerable local interest—stared at him full

in the eyes, and only recollected herself when she discovered that he was returning her gaze.

The girl blushed and looked down. Rennel removed his hat and bowed.

"Excuse me, I have lost my way," said he. "I am a stranger in these parts; can you direct me back to the inn?"

"Oh, yes!" said Margarette. "You are walking straight from it. You have only to retrace your steps."

"Really, I'm afraid I'm very stupid," returned Rennel; "but would you mind pointing out the path? Retracing one's steps is a very easy matter when one is familiar with the district, but—there—thank you so much!"

Margarette showed Rennel his road to the inn. When the young man reached his room he flung himself on to the bed and began to think.

"What luck!" ejaculated he; "what luck! Was there ever such a face and such a smile? Christian, my friend, you are in luck's way."

He got up from the bed and stared at himself in the little looking-glass that hung upon the wall.

"You're handsome enough," said he, peering at his own

"That is Margarette Voegli!"

face and pushing back his hair, "and you're clever enough. Why shouldn't you?—why, indeed! Of course you will; you've done it before and you can do it again. You can keep your coquettes, your grisettes, and your ladies of easy virtue!" cried he, turning round and addressing an imaginary companion; "give me a simple village maiden, the genuine article, and a fair field and no favour."

From which remarks it may be reasonably deduced that Christian Rennel had not lived in the country all his life. Indeed, he had not, and although he was but twenty-four, he was as conversant with Paris, Berlin, and Vienna as he was with his native Sursee. He had supped upon the poisonous honey of Paris in youth, and his palate was now vitiated and surfeited with town dishes. He was a young man without a scruple of any description, and he considered Margarette fair game for his snaring, so accordingly he left his room and prepared to entrap his all-unconscious prey.

He inquired the way to the Voeglis' house, and was directed to the outskirts of the village.

The alpine cottage in which Margarette lived was quaint and picturesque, and stood by itself on the edge of the forest-land.

Rennel loitered about for some little time, hoping to catch a glance of Margarette or to enjoy a word with her.

Presently his patience was rewarded, for he heard the click of a latch, and then saw one of the upper windows open, and Margarette's beautiful face appear. She was in a loose, white robe, with her brown hair falling in bronze clusters around her neck and shoulders.

The moon's rays fell full upon the fair, noble face, so typical of the sweetness of girlhood, and endowed the lovely visage with a pallor that made it seem unearthly and almost heavenly.

Rennel, carefully hiding in the shadows, felt his heart leap at sight of this vision. His blood ran freely through his veins; he began to feel giddy and intoxicated with passion.

All unconscious that she was observed, Margarette leant out from her window, looking up with yearning eyes at the innumerable stars, at the snowy mountains, and at the moon.

To-night she felt strangely disturbed, why, she knew not; and yet—and yet—surely the stranger she had met in the forest was in some way concerned with the inarticulate trouble in her bosom!

How handsome he had looked, and how brave! With what ease he had spoken to her, and how his fine eyes had looked at her!

Suppose he should prove to be the fairy prince who was to step out of the story-book and make her his princess!

Margarette smiled and blushed at the thought. The wind rose a little, and began to toy wantonly with her hair. She looked up once more at the mountains and the stars before shutting her window.

Snow, moonshine, and dreams!

What was the snow going to bring her?

Ah, child! do not seek to find out, seek not to probe into futurity, to foresee the revelations of slow time. Now are your happy hours. Life is to you now nothing but snow, moonshine, and dreams; let the future be the future that shall melt the snow of peace with the hot tears of despair, the future that shall dispel the moonshine of youth and dissolve the dreams of love, the future—— But nay, go to bed and sleep soundly, for the future will be the present all too soon.

The next day Rennel met Margarette again, talked with her and walked with her, and the next day and the next

Every night now he was beneath her bedroom window, unseen but seeing, until one night he was discovered.

Margarette, leaning, as usual, out of the window, saw something move in the shadows. She gave a little cry and started back.

A figure of a man ran forward into the moonlight and fell upon his knees.

"Love, love, do not go away, it is I, Christian, Christian, who loves you!" This was Rennel's declaration.

Margarette was trembling violently; she had already half-acknowledged to herself that she loved the stranger and wondered if he loved her, and here he was upon his knees before her, breathing words of ardour and affection, confessing his great love for her.

"Margarette, my Margarette, tell me that you love me! Ah, love! how can I wait for you to tell me? Tell me now!"

Margarette came again to the window, and stood full in the light of the moon, her face illuminated with a new, strange radiance.

"Christian, I love you!" she said, slowly and distinctly.

She felt herself caught in a great storm of emotion at that moment of confession, and burst in a fit of wild weeping.

Christian ran to the foot of her window, and, catching hold of the green creeper that grew along the wall, swung himself up, and clambered up to her side.

Margarette looked up with a frightened start. His arms were around her, pressing her to him, caressing her in fervent embraces, and his lips, his thirsty lips, were pressed to hers, draining the pure dews of her youth, the love from out her very soul. She was alternately crying and laughing, so full was her young heart with the joy of her new love and the rapture of her new emotions.

Presently she unloosened his arms and sank back.

He followed her into the room.

* * * * * *

When the first bright gleams of early sunlight broke through Margarette's window, and made strange patterns on the carpet, on the succeeding morning, they found her no longer a dreaming child, but a loving woman—a woman who was bound body and soul to love, a woman who had given to love her priceless all.

She lay back amongst the pillows with her bronze tresses straying around her in unregarded disorder, staring at the dancing sunbeams, listening to the birds' pæan to the morn, and thinking, thinking, thinking how it had all happened.

Was she glad? Was she sorry? Glad, glad, glad—a thousand times glad. The earth was more beautiful this morning than it had ever been before; the birds sang with sweeter voices and the sunbeams were brighter than ever, for love had transformed and glorified the world.

Oh, she was glad!

The straying sunbeams gilded with their fairy touch a little white crucifix that hung upon the wall over her bed. Margarette noticed this, knelt down before the emblem of salvation, and prayed for Christian and for love.

While the young girl was saying her prayers Christian was smoking an after-breakfast cigar at the village inn. He was very well satisfied with himself, and yet withal a trifle displeased.

"I never thought it would be so confoundedly easy!" he reflected, taking a gulp at the Bavarian beer he had before him. "But there, they're all alike. I must be a handsome fellow, though. I wonder what Josepha would say? Ha! ha!"

Josepha was a girl with rich parents, living in Sursee, Rennel's native town, and to whom he was engaged to be married.

"Well," said he, tossing off the remainder of the beer and lighting a fresh cigar, "I suppose I must go and see the little Margarette, and promise—oh, yes, I must promise no end of things."

The lovers were constantly meeting now in quiet retreats of woodland and in the public places.

All the villagers said it was a match, and gossipped over the affair to their hearts' content, but the young men were displeased at Margarette giving her hand to a stranger.

Rennel wrote home to Sursee, saying that he was unavoidably detained, but would return home as soon as possible.

And thus some months passed in love and happiness for Margarette, and happiness—we suppose it must be so called—of a grosser kind for Christian Rennel.

But Josepha Soelli, waiting in Sursee for her absent lover, began to grow impatient, and her parents wrote to Christian, threatening to make an end of the match.

This frightened him, for he saw a comfortable fortune slipping from his grasp. Besides this, Margarette's aged mother and the girl's friends were growing anxious about the courtship, and had taxed Rennel with his intentions, and demanded of him to fix a day for the wedding. So Christian fixed a day for the marriage, and departed early one morning for Sursee, returning to the little alpine village no more.

"Well, it has been pleasant," he said to himself, "and, like all pleasant things, it had to end. There's no use making a fuss about it."

His flight was soon discovered in the village, and a great uproar ensued. Only the old people sympathised with Margarette; the young men were gloomily cynical—they had prophesied no better of the stranger—and as for the young women, they pitied Margarette openly, and pity from one's own sex is always a doubtful blessing. The girl herself at first discredited the news of Christian's flight. Her Christian faithless! Her noble lover! No, it was impossible; she would not, she could not, believe it.

But gradually the conviction that his flight was an accomplished fact was forced upon her, and even then she could not bring herself to believe in her lover's perfidy, which was fortunate, for it is doubtful if her brain would have sustained the revelation, but insisted that there must be some hidden influence and necessity that had called him from her side without a word or a token.

"THAT'S ABOUT DONE IT!" SAID CHRISTIAN.

She knew his address in Sursee—he had given this on the impulse of a moment, an impulse that he never afterwards ceased to regret—but was determined not to write to him until she heard from him first, which she felt sure she would do. Daily she waited in expectation of the letter that was to clear up all doubts—the letter that was to restore to her lover his previously exalted character—the letter that never came.

And while Margarette waited, expected, prayed, and wept, she began to feel the first mysterious stirrings of a new life within her.

As of old, she looked up at the towering mountains, with their snow-bright summits, at the innumerable stars, and at the moon, but not with the same dreaming delight that had formerly been hers. She looked up through her tears, in sorrow, at the stars that shone so coldly and so pitilessly upon her despair and at the drifting moon, the Sphinx of the heavens, with the strange, eternal smile.

But the months spun round, without any thought for Margarette's sorrow, and as she passed along the little village street she began to notice that the women stared at her

curiously, and once she saw a group of young men make wry faces at her when they thought she was not looking. A certain young man pestered her with his attentions, and one day the girl who was in love with this fellow met Margarette in the open street and spat at her.

"Harlot!" screamed the girl. "It is easy to see what you are! I wonder you are not ashamed to walk abroad!"

Margarette's mother also spoke to her about her condition. The old woman had lived all her life in an atmosphere of honourable, if humble, content, and could ill sustain the ignominy that had befallen her declining years.

"Why didn't you wait till I was dead, Margy?" she sobbed, swaying backwards and forwards in her high-backed chair. "You might have waited till I was dead; you wouldn't have had to wait long."

"Oh, mother, don't, mother, don't!" cried the miserable girl, throwing herself upon her knees before her mother and clasping her knees in an agony of grief.

The old woman rose and extricated herself from her daughter's embrace.

"No, not yet," she said firmly; "I can't forgive you yet. I can't forgive God for making you what you are."

Wherever Margarette turned she met the averted faces of women and the insulting eyes of the men; where formerly there had always been for her a bright welcome there was now a closed door.

She was shunned in the streets, she was shunned in the markets, but several young fellows of the baser order, who before would not have dared to speak to her but in the most respectful tones, invited her to drink with them with a loathsome cordiality.

Margarette felt she could bear this no longer; the time was now approaching when she would give birth to her child, and the thought of being exposed then to the insults and the jeers and execrations of the villagers filled her heart with dread and terror. She must pocket her pride and write to Christian; he would surely remove her from the odium attendant to the giving birth of an illegitimate child in her own home.

Margarette wrote and told him of her condition and of her misery.

"I must leave here and at once," she said. "I must come to you, Christian, for, beyond you, I have not a friend in the whole world."

She received, sooner than she expected, a reply, couched in the following terms:

"My dearest Love,—Circumstances happened which necessitated my immediate presence here. I will explain all later. I am so grieved for my darling. You must certainly come to me. I will meet my love at the station, etc., etc."

Then followed long and carefully-worded directions for Margarette's journey to Sursee, interpolated with many expressions of love and endearment. How many times did Margarette kiss this letter! The girl was half-demented with joy. Again the sun shone for her, again the roses bloomed, again she looked up, with hope in her heart, to the snow mountains that were always pointing up towards the sky.

She said not a word to her mother or to anyone at home, but secretly one morning left the little village that had been her world from childhood, and walked a distance of some miles to the small town of W——, where she took train for Sursee.

The reader will have probably been surprised at Rennel's letter to Margarette, so full of love and affection, and so minute in its directions for her to join him. Had Christian, then, repented of his infamous conduct? Did he intend to make to the girl all the reparation that lay in his power?

Not a bit of it! Rennel was alarmed at hearing of Margarette's condition. He expected there would be a public scene, an exposure of his infamy by some of Margarette's friends, and the abandonment of his marriage with Josepha Soelli, who, it will be remembered, was a girl with property. Margarette, he determined, must, therefore, be got out of the way at the earliest opportunity.

His nuptials with Josepha were imminent, so it was impossible for him to take a lengthy journey. He accordingly wrote to Margarette, telling her to come to him at Sursee, being fully prepared to murder her on her arrival. So black and foul was his design, we shall now see how he carried his plans into action.

Margarette was expected to reach Sursee on an October evening in 1878. She found the journey in the train monotonous, and longed to arrive at her destination and to be clasped in the loving arms of her dear Christian, who, by the bye, was at that particular moment busy *digging her grave.*

At last the train steamed into Sursee station, Margarette's head out of the window, staring with fond expectancy for her lover. Yes, there he was, as handsome, as noble-looking, as ever. How her heart leapt and her pulses beat as he rushed forward to meet her! With what rapture he strained her to his breast! What long, ardent kisses he pressed to her trembling lips! Oh, joy! oh, happiness! Margarette thought she could never be unhappy again.

Christian led her from the station, talking lover's talk, into a large and thickly-leaved forest, where he had arranged to murder her.

Margarette looked around her in surprise.

"Is this way to your home, dear Christian?" she asked.

"Yes, my—I should say, *our*—home lies just beyond."

And so the two walked in the great silence of the woodland, until suddenly they came upon a roughly-dug hole, with a spade lying beside it, just in their path.

"Give me a kiss, Margarette," said Christian, smiling oddly.

Margarette put up her fair young lips to his, and they kissed. Then Christian burst out laughing. He snatched up the spade and struck the girl a terrible blow across the face. She fell with a dreadful cry, and Christian struck again and again, until the shovel of the spade was red and wet with newly-spilled blood.

"That's about done it!" said Christian, peering into the bleeding and disfigured visage of Margarette.

"Dead!—dead as can be!" he said, and threw the body into the grave. He noticed that she had a pretty necklace on and some rather uncommon ornaments.

"They will do for Josepha," reflected this economical murderer, and accordingly stripped the body of its few poor baubles. Then he hastily threw on to the maimed limbs a few sods, and covered the still bleeding face with some loose earth and tree-branches. Christian was in a hurry, for tomorrow morning he was to be married, and naturally on such an eventful eve there were other things claiming his attention besides burying murdered girls.

He went home, polished up the necklace, and gave it to Josepha.

Margarette was not dead.

She had been stunned by the brutal force of Christian's blows, and was unconscious, but still the spark of life flickered in her heart.

Hours passed; then at last the half-dead life began to assert itself, to struggle for existence; gradually Margarette recovered consciousness.

"Oh, mother! mother! what a horrible dream!" she murmured, thinking she was back in her old bed, far away at home. She was in utter darkness and extreme bodily agony, that grew more acute as she recovered her senses. She could hardly breathe. Her face was wet and sticky with blood that still flowed from several wounds.

What did it all mean? Ah! she remembered now. Christian had tried to murder her, and she was buried alive in the midst of an unknown forest. She would die soon—she and her unborn child!

At that thought she began to struggle for life, and eventually she managed to remove the earth and twigs covering her face. Then she cried for help. The darkness and the silence around her were appalling.

She heard a clock strike distinctly, and wondered if she would be dead before it struck again.

Then she heard footsteps approaching, and cried out again with all the strength that was left in her poor, maimed body. The peasant who was passing heard the cry, and ran, half-frightened and all-wondering, in the direction, and there he found—no, we will draw the veil.

We have described Margarette in all her beauty, in all her pure, girlish innocence, and we cannot describe the agonised, hideously-disfigured creature, stained with blood and mud, that was dragged out of the death-hole in the Sursee forest.

What was left of the once beautiful girl was conveyed in a cart to the Orphan Home, Sursee. During the night she gave birth to a still-born child, and soon afterwards she died.

Christian was arrested while brightening up his wedding apparel. He was at first disposed to be violent, but relapsed subsequently into a morose and sullen demeanour. He was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for life, Switzerland, unfortunately, being one of those countries in which capital punishment has been abolished. He was a peculiarly atrocious scoundrel, and merited a worse fate. As it is, he still lives, though at an advanced age, in one of the Swiss prisons, while Margarette has slept these twenty-five years under the moon and the innumerable stars, and in sight of those snow-clad mountain ridges her young eyes loved to look upon.

Josepha did not keep her necklace!

Criminal Problems

HOW TO PREVENT CRIME—HEALTHY SURROUNDINGS.

THE old proverb, "Prevention is better than cure," is in no case more applicable than in that of our criminal population. The ideal laid down for every criminologist is the prevention of crime in the first place, failing that, the reformation of the delinquent. Punishment must in no case be an act of vengeance on the part of society against the offender. Obviously, if we could remove the criminal influences, which we have detailed in many previous articles, we should be able to dispense with any penal code, but that is to anticipate Utopia. We have, however, to consider what can be done in the way of reducing the crime statistics of this country, and this we propose to discuss in the next set of articles.

In No. 6 of this paper we pointed out how environment is one of the chief causes of crime, and there we quoted the words of one of the greatest authorities on juvenile delinquents, wherein he deplores the impossibility of removing children from the custody of criminal parents. This brings us to the first step in the moral elevation of the country. The most radical cure for crime lies in the proper training of children.

In considering this complex factor in the renovation of the ancient morality we have several points to lay before our readers. First, the surroundings amid which the child is brought up; secondly, the effect of parental control and of example; and, lastly, how we can counteract the effects of heredity.

First comes the question of surroundings. Is it to be expected that a child brought up amid the squalor which obtains in the most criminal areas of England can develop any of the ideas which tend to produce morality? Take, for instance, the region known as the "Fenian Barracks." Here immorality is rife, so much so that the Church has abandoned this district as absolutely irreclaimable. The streets are littered with garbage, the child's only plaything is an old boot or the fragments of a half rotten cabbage. The only language to be heard is a medley of oaths and awful obscenity. Jests which are too indecent for grown-up ears are daily, hourly, in the mouths of the children of this benighted quarter. Men, women, and children live huddled together, several families occupying the same room. The fair sun rarely condescends to shine on the denizens of Devon's Road and Limehouse Cut. Drunkenness prevails by day as well as by night, and the only person whom the children are taught to detest is the representative of law and order.

From childhood the young are accustomed to vice in its various forms, grow used to knowing that their parents are in gaol, and look upon theft as one of the aims of existence. Is it a matter for wonder, then, that these children grow up to be criminals?

Again, take the very houses in which they live. Reared amid dirt, unused to seeing anything pretty, ignorant of even the beauties of nature, their minds develop but the purely animal traits, while the characteristics which distinguish mankind are stunted. The veriest savage is better off than are these children of the darkest slums, inasmuch as he has some code of morality which he follows, and he has a belief in the existence of a Creator, though he calls it Ju-ju, or Obo, or Mumbo-Jumbo. The child of the "lost tenth" knows nothing of a God save as an effective addition to an oath.

Yet, again, the very positions of the various criminal slums is instructive. Long observation has shown us that crime flourishes best on a clay soil. What may be termed the plague spots of London are almost all built on clay or on marsh land, reclaimed by the addition of clay. The Fenian Barracks, the Wandle Valley, and the Potteries, at Kensington, are all in clay regions. The most criminal portions of England are also those where clay is the substratum, while moorland, even in proportion to its population, is by far the least criminal portion of the country. It is possible that the damp exhalations from the sodden ground had some influence on the growing children. This is a question worthy of patient investigation by philanthropists.

To commence, then, in the prevention of crime, it would be well to try and encourage in the people a love for cleanliness and for beauty. This can only be done by destroying these pernicious hotbeds of crime and disease, and housing the poor in better quarters, where the natural emulation which is inborn in everybody will lead them to keep their dwellings decent. Implant in the young the love of cleanliness and of beauty, which can only be done by providing them with bright surroundings, and the first blow is struck at criminal Britain. More than this, it would be as well to reserve the clayey portions of large towns for industrial purposes, instead of for residential, until the exact connection between soil and sin has been discovered.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

THEFT in the time of Homer was rather an honour to a man's character. Lycurgus, in his body of laws, encouraged it. The offence was first made capital under Edmund the Saxon, confirmed by Henry I.

The House of the Broken Goblet.

OUTSIDE the Shun Chee Gate of Pekin there stands an old-fashioned tavern with the sign "The House of the Broken Goblet." Every criminal on his way to execution passes this, and is offered as much wine as he cares to drink, at the expense of the proprietor. The vessel from which he has drunk is then dashed on the ground and shivered to atoms. Hence the strange title of the inn. The reason for this is as follows. Many years ago the inn-keeper was condemned to death, but at the last moment was pardoned. Out of gratitude for his escape from death he vowed that while he lived every poor wretch who was on his way to the beheading ground—a few yards away from the public-house—should be regaled for the last time on earth. Lest, however, peaceable citizens should object to drinking from a goblet which had been used by criminals, the vessels were publicly broken.

Prompt Justice.

THE Turk is not notorious for rapidity of action in any matter save in the infliction of punishment. The penalty in the land of the Sultan follows close on capture, legal formalities being reduced to a beautiful minimum. The recent instantaneous execution of a dynamitard at Salonica recalls another case of swift retribution in which the Turk played a part. The Turkish Ambassador at the Court of Napoleon I. once called at a Parisian jeweller's to purchase a diamond. He selected a very fine specimen, paid for it, and retired. When he had left the goldsmith's little boy told his master that he had seen one of the Ambassador's servants purloin a ring, and on the stock being examined a valuable one was missing. A note was immediately sent to the Embassy praying the Ambassador to make some effort to recover the property. On the following morning two of the Turkish attendants carried a square box into the jeweller's shop, deposited it on the counter, and left without saying a word. On the case being opened it was found to contain the head of the thief, with the ring between his teeth.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

L. V.—Not just at present.

SAFETY.—The answer to "Thinker" will suit you as well.

LOGIC.—Your query had better be put to a lawyer. We do not advise on civil matters.

BILLY.—No. No definite suspicion ever rested on the author of the Great Coram Street Tragedy.

THINKER.—We fail to see the danger in publishing records of Crime. Many judges have recommended it as a good deterrent.

M. M. M.—When we give a date as probable, it means that no accurate or precise information can be obtained from any recognised source. Every trouble is taken to find approximate dates, but sometimes no one can decide between several probable accounts.

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